

Sonny Rollins

Kyle Etges

Signature Recordings

The Bridge. Sonny Rollins took many hiatuses in his career to practice, refine his sound, and incorporate new styles. The most famous of these hiatuses was in the early 60s, when he spent two years practicing on the Williamsburg bridge in New York. *The Bridge* is his first release after this sabbatical, and it features a more refined Rollins and a clearer sense of long-term solo progression. Sonny Rollins's sabbaticals, constant reassessments, and self-reflections are seminal to understanding his music, and helps one comprehend his long term development as a musician. *The Bridge* was recorded in Rockaway, New York for the RCA Victor label in 1962, and features Jim Hall on guitar, Bob Cranshaw on bass, and both Ben Riley and H.T. Saunders on drums.

St. Thomas. Arguably Rollins's most well-known work, *St. Thomas* pulls heavily from the calypso style of his Caribbean upbringing. Sonny Rollins utilizes the diatonic melody and relatively simple harmony in his solo to demonstrate his seemingly-infinite aptitude for motivic development. *St. Thomas* is featured on Sonny Rollins's highest-selling record, *Saxophone Colossus*, which was recorded in Hackensack, New Jersey for the Prestige label in 1956. The recording engineer, Rudy Van Gelder, is arguably one of the most important figures in the history of jazz. Van Gelder recorded multiple jazz legends for decades, and is associated with some of the most important records in the history of the music. Rollins is joined by Tommy Flanagan on piano, Doug Watkins on bass, and Max Roach on drums.

Sonny Please. When studying Sonny Rollins, many would group him into the tenor saxophone torchbearers of the 60s and 70s. However, it's also important to bear in mind that Sonny Rollins is still alive, touring, writing, and performing music. His 2006 outing, *Sonny Please*, is a fine example of his later work. Throughout his career, Rollins embraced many styles and techniques and incorporated them into his playing. His solo style still has his signature use of motivic development and rhythmic interplay, but Sonny Rollins also plays much more freely on these recent recordings. There is also a distinct sense of Rollins "returning to his roots," with a heavier emphasis on the Caribbean styles with which he grew up. *Sonny Please* is self-released through the Doxy label, and was recorded in New York City in 2006. He is joined by Clifton Anderson on trombone, Bobby Broom on guitar, Bob Cranshaw on bass, Steve Jordan on drums, and Kimati Dinizulu on percussion.

Educational Resources

Aebersold, J. (2000). *Vol. 8, Sonny Rollins (Book & CD set)* (pap/com ed.). Indiana, USA: Jamey Aebersold.

Petrusich, A. (2017). A quest to rename the Williamsburg bridge for Sonny Rollins. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/a-quest-to-rename-the-williamsburg-bridge-for-sonny-rollins>

Rollins, S., Sweeney, M. (2014). *Doxy*. Retrieved from <https://www.halleonard.com/product/viewproduct.action?itemid=7012333>

- Grade 1.
- Includes full saxophone section, 3 trumpet parts, 3 trombone parts, guitar, piano, vibraphone, bass, and drums, as well as optional parts for flute, clarinet, french horn, and tuba.

Rollins, S. (2009). *Sonny Rollins: A step-by-step breakdown of the sax styles & techniques of a jazz giant*. Winona, MN: Hal Leonard.

Rollins, S. (2018). *Sonny Rollins omnibook for Bb instruments*. Winona, MN: Hal Leonard.

Miles Davis

Kyle Etges

Signature Recordings

Blue in Green. What can be said about *Kind of Blue* that hasn't already been said? This 1959 release by Miles Davis is monumental; a cornerstone of jazz in its prime. It is so well-rounded and clearly stated that it is often used to introduce new listeners to the jazz idiom. Furthermore, every member of this sextet went on to lead a highly successful jazz career. John Coltrane and Cannonball Adderley on saxophone, Bill Evans and Wynton Kelly on piano, Paul Chambers on bass, and Philly Jo Jones on drums all have an incredible recorded body of work. If one were to list who every jazz musician has ever played with, they would most likely be connected to these seven musicians by less than a few degrees of separation. Several tunes from *Kind of Blue* are still part of the standard jam repertoire, but *Blue in Green* is often understated in its beauty and effectiveness as a standalone piece. The form and harmony is very indicative of Bill Evans, despite Miles being credited as the co-composer on the record. The unusual form and Miles's meandering melody give the piece the sense that it is through-composed. *Kind of Blue* was recorded in New York City in March and April of 1959.

Round Midnight. The album *Round About Midnight* is one of the finest albums of the first legendary quintet, which featured John Coltrane on tenor saxophone, Red Garland on piano, Paul Chambers on bass, and Philly Jo Jones on drums. *Round Midnight* would become one of Miles's signature pieces after he performed it live with Thelonious Monk. Even though Thelonious later stated that Miles "played it wrong," audiences took to Miles's interpretation. This rendition is arguably just as important for the career of John Coltrane, as his solo demonstrates the perfect counterpoint to Miles's approach. Coltrane showcased his style and ability in this solo, and both audiences and musicians in the jazz world began to take note of the young tenor player that would later redefine the music and his instrument. *Round About Midnight* was recorded in New York City for Columbia Records in 1957.

Nefertiti. This Wayne Shorter composition is a fine example of Miles's second legendary quintet, with Wayne on tenor saxophone, Herbie Hancock on piano, Ron Carter on bass, and Tony Williams on drums. Miles wanted Wayne Shorter in his group because of his ability to compose, and after some convincing Wayne left Art Blakey's group to join Miles's quintet. His compositions are perfect for Miles Davis' conception of jazz, featuring long, loose phrasing and large open expanses of harmony. Similar to the personnel on *Kind of Blue*, the second legendary quintet was also somewhat of a career booster for its members, as every musician in this group went on to lead to hugely successful jazz career. *Nefertiti* was recorded on March 4th, 1968 in New York City, for the Columbia label.

Jeru. Miles has a long history of redefining the genre of jazz, and *Birth of the Cool* is the first example of his ability to pioneer into new territory. This album is still one of the finest examples of the West coast, heavily arranged sound emulated by so many musicians at the time and beyond. Although recorded in 1949, this album didn't achieve widespread recognition until its rerelease by Capitol records in 1956. This album is yet another example of Miles's career-boosting effect, featuring several renowned musicians, many of whom were not yet well known. Miles is joined by Lee Konitz and Gerry Mulligan on saxophone, J.J. Johnson and Kai Winding on trombone, Junior Collins, Gunther Schuller, and Sandy Siegelstein on French horn, Al Haig and John Lewis on piano, Joe Schulman on bass, John Barber on tuba, and Kenny Clarke and Max Roach on drums.

Bitches Brew. Miles is credited with some of the most important albums in jazz history, but it could be argued that *Bitches Brew* is the most important album of his personal career. It defines the last 20 years of Miles's life and music, as he largely abandoned traditional bebop and hard bop in favor of this new rock-infused sound. Rumoured to be inspired by a Sly & the Family Stone concert that Miles attended, *Bitches Brew* is Miles' embracing of this new sound, and his endeavor to mix the genre into jazz. This album is yet another example of Miles' career-boosting ability, as the personnel list reads like a short list of practically every significant jazz innovator of the 70s and 80s. Recorded in June 1970 in New York City for the Columbia label, *Bitches Brew* features Wayne Shorter on saxophone, Bennie Maupin on bass clarinet, Joe Zawinul, Larry Young, and Chick Corea on keyboards, John McLaughlin on guitar, Dave Holland and Harvey Brooks on bass, Don Alias, Lenny White, and Jack DeJohnette on drums, and Jim Riley on percussion.

Saeta. One would be remiss not to mention Miles's important collaborations with arranger Gil Evans. After the long-overdue success of *Birth of the Cool* in 1957, Miles and Gil attempted to capitalize on this success on four different projects. *Miles Ahead*, *Quiet Nights*, *Porgy & Bess*, and *Sketches of Spain* are all brilliant collaborations featuring Miles and a larger orchestral setting, but *Sketches of Spain* stands out as a remarkable achievement, both compositionally and musically. This album was also significant for the fusion of jazz and classical music, often referred to as third stream. This album was recorded in 1960 in New York City, for the Columbia label. Personnel on this piece are -in alphabetical order- Danny Bank on bass, clarinet, and bass clarinet (Bass) Billy Barber on tuba, John Barrows on french horn, Steven Berkowitz conducting, Al Block on flute and oboe, James Buffington on Fender rhodes and french horn, Eddie Caine on flugelhorn and flute, Paul Chambers on Bass, Earl Chapin on french horn, Jimmy Cobb on drums, Johnny Coles on Trumpet, Harold Feldman on Clarinet, Flute, and Oboe, Bernie Glow on trumpet, Dick Hixon on trombone, Elvin Jones on percussion, Taft Jordan on trumpet, Jack Knitzer on bassoon, Jose Mangual on percussion, Jimmy McAllister on tuba, Tony Miranda on french horn, Louis Mucci on trumpet, Romeo Penque on oboe, Janet Putnam on harp, Frank Rehak on trombone, Ernie Royal on trumpet, and Joe Singer on french horn.

Educational Resources

Aebersold, J. (2000). *Vol. 7, Music of Miles Davis: Eight classic jazz originals (Book and CD set)* (pap/com ed.). Indiana, USA: Jamey Aebersold.

Best, D., Tomaro, M. (1956). *Move*. Retrieved from <https://www.halleonard.com/product/viewproduct.action?itemid=7012445&lid=0&keywords=Move%20Miles&subsiteid=1&>

- Grade 4
- Includes full saxophone section, 4 trumpet parts, 4 trombone parts, guitar, piano, vibraphone, bass, and drums, as well as chord sheets for C, Bb, Eb, and bass clef instruments.

Davis, M. (2003). *Miles Davis Real Book*. Winona, MN: Hal Leonard.

Davis, M. (2014). *Miles Davis omnibook: For Bb instruments* (spi ed.). Winona, MN: Hal Leonard.

Long, D. N. (1992). *Miles Davis for beginners*. New York, NY: Writers and Readers Publishers.

John Coltrane

Kyle Etges

Signature Recordings

Acknowledgement. The album *A Love Supreme* is Coltrane's magnum opus. Of all of John Coltrane's records, it can be difficult to discern his finest work. But the argument can certainly be made for this record, as it demonstrates both Coltrane and his legendary quartet at their peak. *Acknowledgement* is a reflection of many things in Coltrane's life, music, and spirituality. Spiritually, it is Coltrane calling to god. In his life, it represented his fully-realized devotion to Christianity, as well as his devotion to his craft. Musically, it is a demonstration of Coltrane's increasing interest in 12-tone systems. Coltrane was already reportedly carrying around Slonimsky's book on scales and patterns everywhere he went by the time he recorded *Giant Steps*. *Acknowledgement* takes the 12-tone idea a step further, moving through every key throughout the piece over a static harmony. The end of this movement is marked by the recurring motif being played deliberately in every key. *A Love Supreme* was recorded on December 9th, 1965 in Englewood Cliff, New Jersey for the ABC Paramount label. He is joined by his legendary quartet, with McCoy Tyner on piano, Jimmy Garrison on bass, and Elvin Jones on drums.

Countdown. The title track of *Giant Steps* usually receives most of the recognition amongst jazz musicians and listeners, but *Countdown* always stood out to me. It is equal to *Giant Steps* in harmonic sophistication, if not more so. The form is also noteworthy, breaking the traditional format of a piece by beginning with a drum solo and layering in instruments throughout the piece (the first time all four instruments are heard is in the closing head statement). Coltrane's solo on this recording is prolific, weaving effortlessly between harmonies and demonstrating the fruits of his countless hours in the practice room. Art Taylor's drumming is also noteworthy, perfectly interplaying with Coltrane's vast harmonic structures. The harmony is evidence of Coltrane's interest in 12-tone systems. It is said that he was unable to put down Slonimsky's book on scales and patterns, no matter where he went. This album was recorded in December 1959 in New York City, for the Atlantic label. In addition to Trane, it features Tommy Flanagan on piano, Paul Chambers on bass, and Art Taylor on drums.

Alabama. Many jazz musicians used their music as a call for social change during the civil rights movement, and John Coltrane is no exception. His heart-wrenching piece *Alabama* was written for four children, who were killed by white supremacists in the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham. While Mingus was calling officials out in *Fables of Faubus* and Max Roach was quite literally screaming for change in *Freedom Now*, Coltrane's protest seems more poignant than vindictive. Coltrane's solo describes feelings that cannot be easily put into words, though they are feelings we all relate to in the wake of national tragedies. *Alabama* is featured on the album *Live at Birdland*, although *Alabama* was in fact recorded in a studio in New York City and simply included with the live tracks. The album was released in 1964, and features McCoy Tyner on piano, Jimmy Garrison on bass, and Elvin Jones on drums.

My Favorite Things. This piece and album is significant for its proverbial resuscitation of an instrument which was at the time considered passe: the soprano saxophone. Coltrane breathes new life into the instrument by incorporating a biting sound reminiscent of how one imagines the sound of a greek Aulos. The form of Coltrane's version of *My Favorite Things* is also significant, particularly its interspersed open solo sections. The Coltrane quartet recorded several pieces that are in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, on soprano saxophone, and feature these open expanses for soloing, indicating the pervasive influence of *My Favorite Things*, even in the group's own sound. Coltrane takes two solos over this piece, which both incorporate his prolific sheets of sound. But McCoy Tyner clearly steals the show on this recording, playing a solo so long and logically developed that the band refused to cut it down to album length. *My Favorite Things* takes up an entire side, plus a bit of the B side of the record. *My Favorite Things* was recorded in 1961 in New York City for the Atlantic label, and features McCoy Tyner on piano, Steve Davis on bass, and Elvin Jones on drums.

Educational Resources

Aebersold, J, (1999). *Vol. 75, Countdown to Giant Steps*. Indiana, USA: Jamey Aebersold.

Coltrane, J., Murtha, P. (1957). *Blue Train*. Retrieved from <https://www.jwpepper.com/Blue-Train/10061497.item#/>

- Grade 1.
- Includes full sax section, 3 trumpet parts, 3 trombone parts, guitar, piano, bass, and drums, as well as optional parts for flute, clarinet, french horn, tuba, and vibraphone.

Coltrane, J. (2013a). *John Coltrane - Omnibook: For Bb instruments*. Winona, MN: Hal Leonard.

Coltrane, J. (2013b). *The Trane Book: The John Coltrane Real Book*. Winona, MN: Hal Leonard.

Dannewitz, E. (1997). *John Coltrane - II/V/I Patterns*. n.p. Retrieved from <https://www.scribd.com/document/359686103/john-coltrane-ii-v-i-patterns-pdf>

Ornette Coleman

Kyle Etges

Signature Recordings

Lonely Woman. In 1959, Ornette Coleman challenged the jazz world and its traditional conceptions with the daringly prophetic title *The Shape of Jazz to Come*. This record opened the floodgates for free jazz, the avant-garde, and generally alternate approaches to the idiom. Coleman's monumental work is also a somewhat unsung hero in the civil rights movement, as he employs his harmolodic approach to give equal treatment to every element of the music. This equality was the same equality that Coleman sought for socially during his lifetime. *Lonely Woman* stands out as a beautiful and singable melody, despite the lack of harmony to ground it. Charlie Haden's double-stops throughout the melody statement do little to harmonically support Ornette's lines, yet somehow it is precisely what the piece needs. Ornette's solo on this recording is -to say the least- ethereal and heart-wrenching. *The Shape of Jazz to Come* was recorded in 1959 in New York City for the Atlantic label, and features Don Cherry on trumpet, Charlie Haden on bass, and Billy Higgins on drums.

Skies of America. Written and premiered in 1972, Ornette's symphonic piece *Skies of America* is a monumental composition, and demonstrates his conception of sound in a much larger context. Ornette only solos a few times on this album, but his hand can be heard throughout every facet of the piece. This work also incorporates polytonality and rhythmic displacements reminiscent of Stravinsky. *Skies of America*, above all, demonstrates Ornette's uncanny ability to transcend his idiom, cementing him as not only one of the most important composers in jazz, but as one of the most important American composers in history. *Skies of America* was recorded in London in 1972 for the Columbia label, and features Dewey Redman on saxophone, Charlie Haden on bass, Ed Blackwell on drums, and the 1972 London Symphony Orchestra.

Sound Grammar. Like his contemporary Sonny Rollins, Ornette Coleman transcends the time period that many jazz historians place him in; he performed until his death in 2015. *Sound Grammar* was certainly the most revered, receiving a Pulitzer Prize, a Grammy nomination, and the MacArthur Genius Award within a year of its release. This album is also significant for being Ornette's first release in over 10 years, and the first release on his own record label, also called Sound Grammar. The album features a mixture of older compositions and new works, and Ornette's vast array of influences are apparent on the record, such as the opening notes of *The Rite of Spring* heard in *Sleep Talking*. This album was recorded on October 14th, 2005 in Ludwigshafen, Germany, and features Gregory Cohen and Tony Falanga on bass, and Ornette's son Denardo Coleman on drums and percussion.

Educational Resources

Coleman, D. (n.d.). *My father was deep*. Retrieved from

<http://www.ornettecoleman.com/father-deep-denardo-coleman/>

Coleman, O. (2014). *Ornette Coleman: Jazz play-along volume 166*. Winona, MN: Hal Leonard.

Ornette Coleman wins music pulitzer. (2007). *NPR*. Retrieved from

<https://www.npr.org/2007/04/16/9607210/ornette-coleman-wins-music-pulitzer>

Rush, S. (2016). *Free jazz, harmolodics, and Ornette Coleman*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge Publishing.

Stephans, R. (2017). *Experiencing Ornette Coleman (A listener's companion)*. Baltimore, MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing.

Guided Listening Exercise

Kathelin Gray

As we listen to Ornette's composition *Kathelin Gray*, discuss the following questions:

- What key is this piece in? Is there a key?
- What is the tempo? Is there a tempo?

The author of this book excerpt (Stephen Rush) includes harmonies in the part, but they are more implied than stated. Listen again to Charlie Haden's playing throughout the recording. Is he playing ahead of or behind the "beat?"

Some of you may be surprised to see some familiar tools throughout this melody. Identify [with brackets] instances of sequencing throughout *Kathelin Gray*.

Before we can talk about what free jazz is, let's talk about what it isn't.

- Is free jazz atonal? Not necessarily.
- Does free jazz mean you can play whatever you want? This piece has a strict layout...
- Can free jazz be beautiful? Sublime? Serene? You decide!

Final thought: Stephen Rush's quote in the second paragraph on page 23:

"Confounding? Sure. Cohesive? Absolutely."

Joe Henderson

Kyle Etges

Signature Recordings

Lush Life. Joe Henderson is joined on the album *Lush Life: The Music of Billy Strayhorn* by Wynton Marsalis on trumpet, Stephen Scott on piano, Christian McBride on bass, and Gregory Hutchinson on drums. However, Henderson's rendition of the title track features none of those people. Instead, Henderson gives a stirring interpretation of Strayhorn's melody entirely a cappella. His strong sense of the lyrical melody is interspersed by his incredible technical facility on the tenor saxophone, often playing lines that would be impossible for any other player. The album's instrumentation is well-balanced throughout each Strayhorn composition. While some pieces utilize every musician on the record, Henderson also plays three duets with McBride, Scott, and Hutchinson respectively throughout the album. *Lush Life* was recorded by the legendary Rudy Van Gelder at his studio in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey in 1992. This album was released on the Verve label.

Mode for Joe. One of Henderson's first records as a leader was already pushing the boundaries of modal jazz. The album features one strong composition after another, with the title track *Mode for Joe* being the foremost example. This piece only features two chords, but somehow Henderson's solo never seems to lose momentum. This piece and album are fine examples of Henderson's compositional prowess, and would cement him as an important jazz composer for decades to come. *Mode for Joe* was recorded in New York City for the Blue Note label in 1966, and features Lee Morgan on trumpet, Curtis Fuller on trombone, Bobby Hutchinson on vibraphone, Cedar Walton on piano, Ron Carter on bass, and Joe Chambers on drums.

A Felicidade. One of Henderson's last albums, *Double Rainbow*, was originally meant to be a collaboration between the saxophonist and the legendary Brazilian composer Antonio Carlos Jobim. Jobim's death prevented the meetup from ever occurring, but Henderson moved forward with the project as a dedication to Jobim. Henderson is yet another musician difficult to categorize into a specific time period. Though he was already a prolific saxophonist in the 60s, he continued to improve and record incredible music until his death in 2001. His take of *A Felicidade* is Henderson at his finest, and one of the last recordings we have of his playing. *Double Rainbow* was recorded at the Van Gelder Studio in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey in 1995, for Verve records. It features Oscar Catro-Neves on guitar, Herbie Hancock and Eliane Elias on piano, Christian McBride and Nico Assumpção on bass, and Jack DeJohnette and Paulo Braga on drums.

Educational Resources

Aebersold, J. (2004). *Vol. 108, Joe Henderson: Inner Urge (pap/com ed.)*. Indiana, USA: Jamey Aebersold.

Henderson, J. (1996). *The best of Joe Henderson: Tenor sax*. Winona, MN: Hal Leonard.

Henderson, J. (2012). *Isotope*. Retrieved from <https://www.jwpepper.com/Isotope/10348444.item#>

- Grade 5
- Includes full sax section, 5 trumpet parts, 4 trombone parts, guitar, piano, bass, and drums.

Henderson, J., Richards, E. (arr.) (2010). *Recorda Me*. Retrieved from <https://www.jwpepper.com/Recorda-me/10093199.item#>

- Grade 4
- Includes full sax section, 4 trumpet parts, 4 trombone parts, guitar, piano, bass, and drums.

Martin, M. (1991). Joe Henderson Interview. *The Saxophone Journal*. Retrieved from http://www.melmartin.com/html_pages/Interviews/henderson.html