

Michael Gonzales On Greg Tate

This morning, I couldn't write. Though I'm on deadline to finish a Village Voice critique about my favorite band Apollo Heights (whose disc *White Music for Black People* should be blasting from your boombox right now, since it's the perfect soundtrack for the forthcoming narrative), I can't wrap my mind around a review at this moment.

Instead, I sat down at the keyboard and chopped-up a textual testimonial to one of my favorite writers, once known as Ironman.

Last Friday evening at the Studio Museum of Harlem on a 125th Street, a bunch of the New York Niggerati (and a few palefaces) gathered to pay homage to cultural critic, short story writer, musician and Black aesthetic lighting rod Greg Tate. Looking as young as the day I first met him more than two decades before (black don't crack), it was amazing that the brother was turning fifty years old.

With familiar folks like Vernon Reid, Dream Hampton, Kevin Powell, Maureen McMahon (whose 2004 tome *Right to Rock: The Black Rock Coalition and the Cultural Politics of Race* is a must buy), Charles Stone III, Trey Ellis, Bruce Mack, Karen R. Good, Arthur Jafa, Nicole Moore and others in attendance, all were gathered to celebrate the birthday and legacy of the Afro-American king of funky critical bop.

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