

R.I.P. Ornette Coleman

[youtube id="d0HB8ybKJzo"]

Free and avant-garde jazz pioneer Ornette Coleman died today in NYC at the age of 85. Coleman was a leader of the free jazz movement in the '50's and '60's with albums like *The Shape Of Jazz To Come*, *Change of The Century*, *Something Else!* and *Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation*. Coleman's original quartet consisted of Billy Higgins, Charlie Haden, and Don Cherry and he described the unique style lead by his alto saxophone as harmolodics. He was married to the late jazz poet Jayne Cortez for ten years between '54-'64 with whom he had his son Denardo Coleman. Denardo became a drummer for both of his parents and made his first recording with his father at age 10 on the 1966 album *The Empty Foxhole*. In the '70's Ornette Coleman took on a funk/rock sound with his band Prime Time that helped the careers of Ronald Shannon Jackson, James Blood Ulmer and Jamaaladeen Tacuma. Coleman's music was of the first wave to challenge Charlie Parker's ideas and he became a jazz icon despite little recognition in the mainstream. In 2007 he became the second musician to receive a Pulitzer Prize for his 2006 album *Sound Grammar*. He was the second jazz artist to receive the honor. He was also the recipient of a MacArthur Genius Grant, A Lifetime Grammy Achievement Award and an honorary doctorate from University Of Michigan.