

R.I.P. Tony Allen



Nigerian drummer Tony Allen, who created the Afrobeat genre with Fela Kuti died in Paris at the age of 79 on Thursday. The cause of death was an aortic aneurysm. Allen was Kuti's drummer and musical director from 1968 to 1979 for the Africa '70 band. The artists had played together in the past on the Lagos scene but Fela chose Allen for his band because he was the only drummer using the highlife sound and blending it with jazz. It was during this time that Fela produced music like the incendiary *Zombie* album that criticized the Nigerian government. The music was so popular that the officials destroyed Fela's Kalakuta Republic commune and threw his mother out of a window. Allen did release three solo albums while he was with Fela; *Jealousy*, *Progress* and *No Accommodation For Lagos*. By the end of the decade, Allen left Fela's band for good and morphed his sound into what he called Afrofunk using R&B, dub, electronic and rap. He recorded over 10 solo albums and made music with many collaborators including Manu Dibango, Damon Albarn, DJ Jeff Mills, Flea and Oumou Sangaré. In 2019, filmmaker Opiyo Okeyo's film about Allen's life *Birth Of Afrobeat* screened at the American Black Film Festival.

[youtube id="Qj5x6pbJMyU"]

[youtube id="2QwqShu1kGY"]