

R.I.P. Bill Lee



Jazz musician and composer Bill Lee died on May 24th at age 94. Lee was a bass player known for scoring his son Spike Lee's first four films. Mr. Lee was a native of Snow Hill, Alabama and he eventually settled in the Fort Greene section of Brooklyn in 1959. He was one of many Black artists who made their home there and created a bohemian community. Lee accompanied several other artists including Bob Dylan, Aretha Franklin, Duke Ellington, Harry Belafonte, Arlo Guthrie, Odetta, Simon and Garfunkel and Tom Paxton. He was the founder and director of the seven-piece New York Bass Violin Choir, critically acclaimed for its performances of Lee's folk operas. He scored Spike Lee's *Mo' Better Blues*, *Do The Right Thing*, *School Daze*, and *She's Gotta Have It*. The latter exposed Brooklyn's Black bohemia to the world and Lee had an appearance giving his philosophy on Nola Darling's autonomy. His soundtracks helped tell the story of the visuals and were essential to the movement and understanding of the films. *Do The Right Thing* is the only movie where he did not appear. Spike Lee and his father had a disagreement and stopped working together but reconnected on a family level years later.

