

R.I.P. Faruq Z. Bey

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Detroit jazz legend, poet, theorist and fierce spirit Faruq Z. Bey passed on June 1st. Bey was the central force behind the innovative jazz band Griot Galaxy known for their Sun Ra, Eric Dolphy and Art Ensemble of Chicagoesque sound that was anything but derivative. Their world class lineup included Bey, Tani Tabbal, Anthony Holland, Jaribu Shahid and David McMurray. But there were several other musicians who played with the band including Spencer Barefield, Sadiq Muhammad, Patrice Williams, Ken Thomas, Tariq Samad, David Abdul Kahafiz and Elreta "Duchess" Dodds. The band recorded a total of [3 full albums](#) and they also appeared on albums from Phil Renelin and the *Montreux Detroit Collection*. They were the only group of its kind and were influential for 20 years. Detroit-bred musician James Carter learned a lot of his musical direction from Bey's ensemble. Bey's poetry and writing were just as dynamic as his music and his *Toward A "Ratio" nal Aesthetic* was supposed to be reissued this fall. In the 2000's he did a lot of work with the [Northwoods Improvisers](#) and he was scheduled to perform with Don Was this year at the Concert of Colors. Although Griot Galaxy disbanded years ago the passing of Faruq Z. Bey truly ends that era of Detroit jazz innovation. [The Metro Times](#) did a full profile on him in 2003 that gives the full story of creative ascendance, fall (near fatal motorcycle accident) and rebirth as a cool elder statesman still looking for new notes until his ultimate crossover.