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## Gary Bartz

"Bartz is a remarkable saxophonist who can easily recall the more lyrical moments of Coltrane or the R&B stylings of players like Hank Crawford." – *R. Dante Sawyer, Jazziz*

A native of Baltimore, Gary Bartz ventured to New York City to attend the Julliard School in 1958. At the time, performers such as Thelonius Monk, Ornette Coleman, and Miles Davis were playing at Birdland and the city's premiere clubs every night, and Bartz regularly snuck in to see them.

In the 1960s, Bartz joined the Max Roach/Abbey Lincoln Group and the Charles Mingus Jazz Workshop, quickly earning a reputation as the greatest alto saxophonist since Cannonball Adderley. In 1965, after meeting the group at his parent's nightclub, he joined Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and recorded *Soulfinger*, his recording debut. Around the same time he began working with McCoy Tyner, a relationship that deepened the influence of John Coltrane on Bartz, and which continues today.

In 1970, Bartz received a call from Miles Davis, who asked Bartz to perform with his band at the historic Isle of Wight Festival. In the same year Bartz also formed his own group, Ntu Troop, after the Bantu word for "unity." Ntu blended soul, funk, African folk music, hard bop, and avant-garde jazz on such albums as *I've Known Rivers and Other Bodies*, based on the poetry of Langston Hughes, as well as *Music Is My Sanctuary*, *Love Affair*, *Another Earth*, and *Home*.

In 1995, Bartz released *The Red and Orange Poems*, a "musical mystery novel," and won a Grammy Award for his playing on McCoy Tyner's *Illuminations*.

Overall, Bartz has recorded more than 40 solo albums and over 200 as a guest artist. He recently released *Coltrane Rules: Tao of a Music Warrior, Live at the Jazz Standard Volume 1* and *Volume 2*, and several others, on his own label, OYO, which is named for the Nigerian tribe and the acronym "Own Your Own." He was also spotlighted in the "Blindfold Test" section of DownBeat magazine in January 2008, and continues to perform with McCoy Tyner in such cities as Tokyo and Los Angeles.