

Pioneering Jazz Icon

Lionel Hampton, 94, the frenetic¹⁾ jazz vibraphonist²⁾, gifted bandleader and storied showman who was one of the most celebrated musicians of the swing era and went on to a six-decade career on the American stage, died on August at a hospital in New York after a heart attack.

A dynamic showman with an electric personality, Hampton was one of the last giants of jazz. He pioneered the use of the vibraphone as a jazz instrument and single-handedly popularized its use.

Hampton has cut hundreds of records. He was known for tremendous energy and for directing bands that were among the most long-lived and consistently popular large ensembles in jazz. His work has been hailed by everyone from presidents to jazz critics and endorsed by the public through enthusiastic attendance of his performances and unending sales of his records. Hampton was born on April 20, 1908, in Louisville, Kentucky. He began working as a drummer when he was a teenager. He spent many of his formative musical years in Los Angeles, playing with top local bands and some great national figures as they came through town. Among them were Louis Armstrong—who first encouraged him to play the vibraphone—and, later, Benny Goodman. He was one of the first musicians to bridge the racial gap between blacks and whites in jazz. He joined drummer Gene Krupa and pianist Teddy Wilson to form the multiracial³⁾ Benny Goodman quartet in the 1930s. Hampton later recalled, “I didn’t recognize that it was a social advancement, but it was the first time blacks and whites ever played together out in public.”

By 1930, he was touring extensively on the West Coast with his own groups, making records and enjoying billing as the “fastest drummer in the world,” when he struck his first note on a vibraphone. He played with Armstrong’s group for a year, establishing the vibraphone as a jazz instrument and himself as its top interpreter.

Hampton played the vibes with lightning swiftness and harmonic and melodic⁴⁾ simplicity and the drums with a fierce, driving rhythm. He became a household name after recording such hits as Moon Glow and Dinah with Goodman in the 1930s and continued to make the charts in the 1940s and 1950s. He kept up a torrid⁵⁾ performing pace, appearing at colleges and jazz festivals across the country and on countless television variety shows. He also wrote more than 200 pieces of music, including such jazz standards as Evil Gal Blues and Midnight Sun. He once estimated that he performed his best-known composition, Flyin’ Home, more than 300 times a year from 1937 to 1987.

In 1940, he left Goodman and started his own big band, featuring a big sound, swinging arrangements and such soloists⁶⁾ as Washington. Hampton’s newly recorded big-band version of Flyin’ Home became a huge success. The band specialized in boogie-woogie⁷⁾, jump and later bop, and by the early 1950s it had become as much a rhythm and blues as a jazz attraction. But it nevertheless remained the medium for the introduction of many jazz talents.

Hampton dissolved the big band in 1965 but continued to play with a sextet he

called the Inner Circle. He remained an attraction at concerts and jazz festivals, despite ill health in his eighties.

He played into his nineties. In 1995, after suffering two strokes, he received an award for artistic excellence at Manhattan's first Jazz at Lincoln Center Awards gala, then performed a swinging rendition⁷⁾ of Goodman's Air Mail Special on the vibraphone. Over the decades, Hampton was a consistent winner of annual polls as the best vibes player in the business. He won countless awards (including the Kennedy Center Lifetime Achievement Award in 1992) and saw both a Berlin street, Hampton—street, and the music school of the University of Idaho named in his honor.

Through all of it, Hampton once said, he had just one goal: "I want to be remembered for spreading happiness and goodwill." He did just that.

President Bush issued a statement saying that Hampton "was an American music legend and will be sorely missed."

爵士乐宗师莱昂内尔·汉普顿

莱昂内尔·汉普顿是一位极富激情的爵士乐电颤琴演奏家、极具天赋的乐队领队，爵士乐史上著名的表演家。他是强节奏爵士乐时代最富盛名的音乐人之一，在美国舞台上有着60年的演艺生涯。今年8月，这位大师因心脏病发作在纽约的一家医院辞世，享年94岁。

汉普顿是一位个性鲜明、极具活力的表演艺术家，也是爵士乐的巨匠之一。他首创把电颤琴作为爵士乐的演奏器乐，并独自将它普及化。汉普顿录制了数百张唱片。他以精力充沛，组建了爵士乐坛上长盛不衰的大型乐队而闻名遐迩。他的作品受到了从总统到爵士乐评论家的赞赏和公众的支持。他们疯狂地观看他的演出，不断地购买他的唱片。

1908年4月20日汉普顿出生在肯塔基州的路易斯维尔。十几岁时他当了一名鼓手。在洛杉矶度过的数年是他的音乐风格形成期。他同当地顶尖的乐队和一些来小镇演出的杰出的音乐人同台演出。这里面有路易斯·阿姆斯特朗，是他第一个鼓励汉普顿演奏颤音琴。后来他又遇到了本尼·古德曼。汉普顿是第一个打破爵士乐中种族隔阂的音乐人之一。20世纪30年代，他与鼓手吉恩·克鲁帕和钢琴演奏家特迪·威尔逊组建了多种族的本尼·古德曼四重奏乐团。汉普顿后来回忆说：“我并没有意识到这是一种社会进步，但这确实是黑人和白人第一次在公众场合同台演出。”

到1930年，汉普顿同他的乐队沿西海岸巡演，录制音乐，荣登排行榜上“世界上最快的鼓手”。这时他开始演奏颤音琴。汉普顿同阿姆斯特朗的乐队演出了1年。他把颤音琴确定为爵士乐的演奏乐器，而他自己也成为该乐器最出色的阐释者。

汉普顿演奏颤音琴时轻灵、和谐、旋律简洁优美，而击鼓时则活力四射，节奏强劲。20世纪30年代他与古德曼共同录制了热门金曲Moonglow和Dinah，成为家喻户晓的人物。40年代和50年代他的唱片一直畅销不衰。他保持着惊人的演出频率，现身于各个大学、爵士音乐节和无数的电视综艺节目。汉普顿还创作了200多首乐曲，包括爵士流行曲Evil Gal Blues和Mid—night Sun。他曾估计从1937年到1987年，他那首广为人知的作品Flyin' Home每年演奏超过300次之多。

1940年汉普顿离开古德曼，组建了自己的大乐队。该乐队演奏嘹亮，节奏强劲，并收罗了如华盛顿这样的独奏演员。汉普顿重新录制的大乐队版的Flyin' Home取得了巨大的成功。大乐队擅长演奏布鲁斯乐曲、强节奏爵士乐和博普爵士乐。到20世纪50年代早期，它以爵士乐和节奏布鲁斯闻名。但它一直是许多爵士乐天才的摇篮。

1965年汉普顿解散了大乐队，但仍和他称之为“圈内人”的六重奏乐团演出。尽管他已80高龄，健康不佳，但仍是音乐会和爵士音乐节的亮点。

进入90岁后，汉普顿仍然坚持演出。1995年，在两次中风后，他在曼哈顿首届爵士乐音乐节上获优秀艺术家奖，并在林肯艺术中心颁奖演出中用颤音琴演奏了古德曼一首强节奏爵士乐风格的Air Mail Special。数十年里，汉普顿在每年的民意调查中不断当选为娱乐界最出色的颤音琴演奏家，还获得了无数的奖项（包括1992年肯尼迪中心颁发的终生成就奖），见证了柏林市的汉普顿大街和以他的名字命名的艾德大学的音乐学院。

在经历了这一切后，汉普顿曾经说，他只有一个目标：“我想让世人记住我是在传播幸福和友善。”他确实做到了。

布什总统发表声明说：“汉普顿是美国音乐界的传奇人物。人们会非常想念他。”

NOTE 注释：

1. frenetic [fri'netik] adj. 狂热的，极富激情的
2. vibraphonist [vaɪbrə'fəʊnɪst] n. 电颤演奏家
3. multiracial ['mʌlti'reɪʃəl] adj. 多民族的，多民族和睦相处的
4. melodic [mi'lɒdɪk] adj. 有旋律的，调子美妙的
5. torrid ['tɔrɪd] adj. 炽热的，很强的
7. boogie-woogie [bu:gi'wu:gi; (US) bugi'wʊgi] n. (美国的) 布吉伍吉舞
8. rendition [ren'dɪʃən] n. 表演，演唱