



MARION HAYDEN

daughter of the way

THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

KRESGE EMINENT ARTIST

2025

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CONTENTS

COUNTING IN

6 / FOREWORD rip rapson

8 / DIRECTOR'S LETTER katie mcgowan

10 / ARTIST STATEMENT marion hayden

12 / VESSEL ON BASS nichole m. christian

HAYDEN'S ORBIT

36 / SPACE OF HER OWN mark stryker

44 / BECAUSE SHE STAYED regina carter

48 / LESSONS IN LINEAGE

70 / TIPS BEYOND THE BANDSTAND

74 / LEGACY IN MOTION lillien waller

80 / CARRYING IT ON bill harris

84 / THE BASS IS WOMAN melba joyce boyd

LINER NOTES

88 / A GALAXY OF GIGS

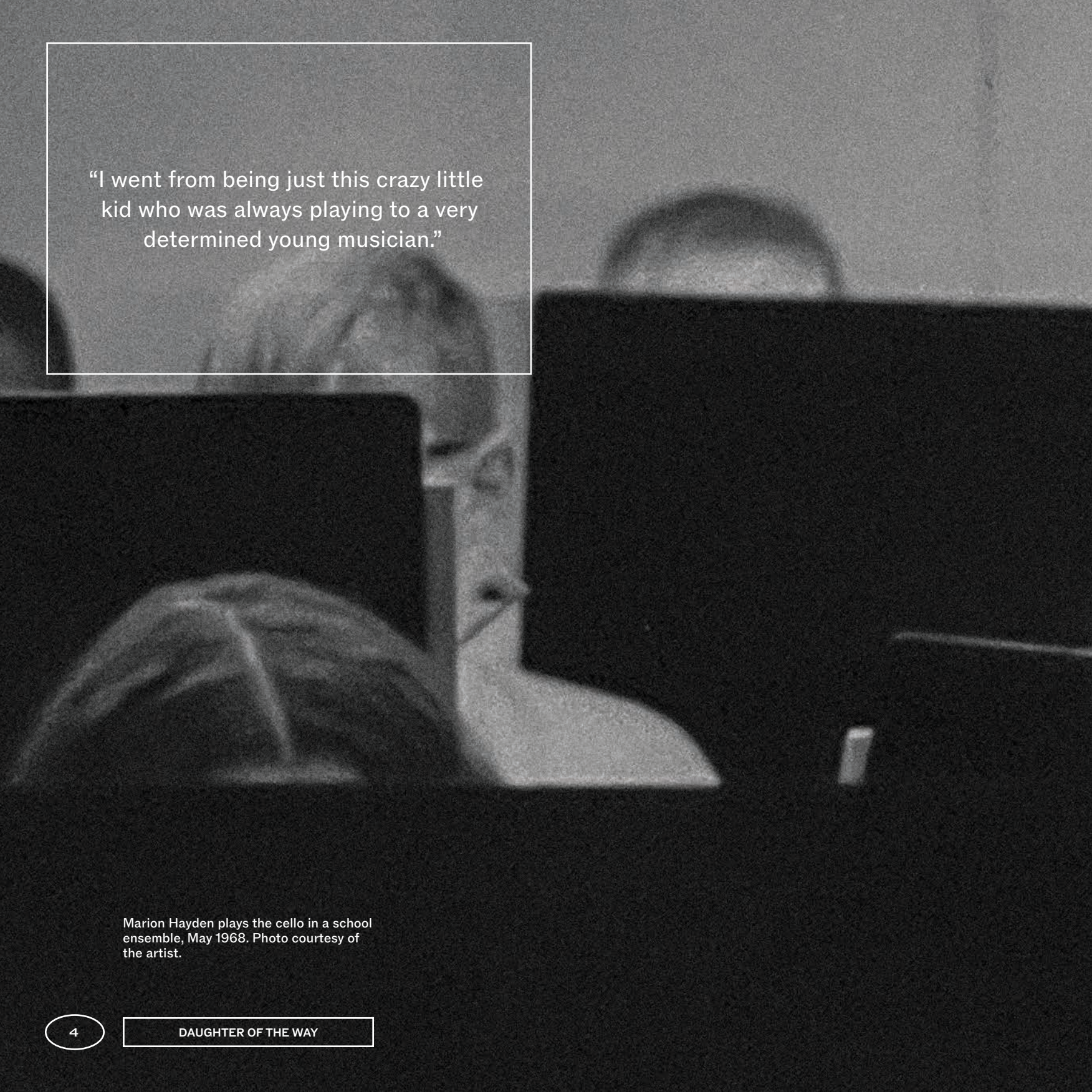
92 / VISUAL HISTORY

114 / SELECT BIOGRAPHY

118 / KRESGE ARTS IN DETROIT

120 / THE KRESGE EMINENT ARTISTS

122 / CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



“I went from being just this crazy little kid who was always playing to a very determined young musician.”

Marion Hayden plays the cello in a school ensemble, May 1968. Photo courtesy of the artist.

COUNTING IN





Photo courtesy of The Kresge Foundation.

What is the essence of jazz?

Is it in the forward momentum, the feeling of swing time that tilts forward in syncopated anticipation, that raises the stakes on whatever comes next?

Is it in the improvisation, the sense that composition can be the starting point rather than the end; the sense that surprise is always possible? Is it in the community of the bandstand, the interrelations and split-second negotiations that bring a coherent sound out of disparate instrumentalists, an onstage metaphor for democracy in action, as Wynton Marsalis, jazz's pre-eminent performer-spokesman, has described it?

Yes, it's all those things ... and more ... that have been passed on musician-to-musician since the genre's beginnings circa the birth of the 20th century. And it's a tradition that's exemplified by our 2025 Kresge Eminent Artist Marion Hayden.

Marion is a true daughter of Detroit jazz, very much in the lineage of trumpeter Marcus Belgrave and saxophonist Wendell Harrison, our previous Kresge Eminent Artists from the realm of jazz. Belgrave and Harrison and others you'll meet in the pages of this monograph were the jazz elders of the 1970s and 1980s when a young Hayden was establishing herself as a bassist on Detroit's jazz scene. Today, it is Hayden on the forefront of upholding and extending the Detroit jazz legacy ... and passing on to younger musicians the lessons of swing, improvisation, bandstand praxis and more that were generously passed on to her.

And, in that, she is like all the Kresge Eminent Artists – the musicians, composers, visual artists, writers, photographers. They have all modeled a generosity of spirit that goes with sharing the fruit of their hard-earned labor and a belief in a shared future in which such works will be valued.

That is the story that we strive to tell in each Kresge Eminent Artist monograph. We seek to elevate artists and artistry in our community, to reaffirm our belief in the ability of arts and culture to root us in the past, to give cohesiveness to our lives today ... to inspire our own creativity, to hopefully see anew the possibilities for tomorrow.

In short, we hope to pull off in these pages something akin to the magic that Marion manifests when she takes the stage and leaves us in a better place when the show is over.

Rip Rapson is president and CEO of The Kresge Foundation.

katie mcgowan

On the bleak, final day of January 2025, Marion Hayden emerged from the rain like a sunbeam full of warmth and energy for a lunch celebrating her selection as the year's Kresge Eminent Artist. Over the years, I've casually observed her disarming presence in Detroit's jazz scene: she is chic yet approachable, exuding calm confidence and strength.



Marion Hayden plays the bass at home in February 2025. Photo by Erin Kirkland for The Kresge Foundation.

The Kresge Eminent Artist Award has been bestowed upon a diverse array of singularly talented artists in its 17 years. While the links are most apparent amongst the jazz musicians, including fellow greats Marcus Belgrave (2009) and Wendell Harrison (2018)—whom Hayden cites as mentors—there is another bright through-line in the award’s trajectory: intrepid women.

Since its inception, the honor has been granted to 10 trailblazing women at the top of their respective fields, all defying the gender roles of the century into which they were born. In today’s political climate, it feels especially consequential to recognize a Black woman who has never been afraid to take up space.

The grit of this artist—whose drive to create led her deep into the Detroit jazz scene at a time when, as she anecdotally mentions, women were often looked upon as romantic prospects rather than serious musicians — is one of Hayden’s superpowers. The rebellion of pushing through the gender barrier in a male-dominated field is something that people of a certain age innately recognize when talking about a lifetime achievement award for a woman in jazz. Still, this fact—we have learned from community members’ reactions—is also apparent and inspiring to young people working in the field.

Keeping jazz, especially women in jazz, both visible and in the conversation, is an essential form of representation that Hayden lives routinely by performing, teaching, mentoring, mothering, and carrying out all the unseen labor involved in being a woman and professional artist. While these accomplishments are not something Hayden foregrounds—she is humble and always quick to name her mentors—they exemplify so much of the often-unrecognized work of women. The demands placed on an artist to make a career in this discipline are immense. She does the work.

At Kresge Arts in Detroit, we see and appreciate the life-changing effects of these awards and take individual and collective pride in doing the work with integrity and care. Our work’s deeper meaning and value is here, in facilitating a process that casts a light onto artists that radiates far beyond their particular métier. The selection of Marion Hayden as the 2025 Kresge Eminent Artist is a triumph.

May we all be so tenacious and brave.

Katie McGowan is director of Kresge Arts in Detroit.

ARTIST STATEMENT

marion hayden



Marion Hayden at home in February 2025. Photo by Erin Kirkland for The Kresge Foundation.

It has been a privilege and a gift to learn and experience music in Detroit.

The informal music education here is thorough and rigorous and includes arranging, composing, and producing. The mentoring I received from the men and women in this music community was critical to my development as a creative artist. It instilled in me a sense of deep reverence and respect for music traditions, but also a fearlessness and openness about bringing those traditions forward in an original and authentic way. I'm thrilled to carry it on.

VESSEL ON BASS nichole m. christian



Marion Hayden in a rehearsal with students at the University of Michigan in April 2025. Photo by Erin Kirkland for The Kresge Foundation.

“I’m a working musician!”

Marion Hayden is declaring these words in typical Marion Hayden fashion: She is in motion, cruising north up I-75, bound with her signature bass in tow, for a new week-long music residency in Traverse City, Michigan.

From the passenger seat, while her son drives, she is insistent on explaining the delicate choreography she must do just to stay in sync with her jam-packed schedule, not to mention the added effort required to find a free slot for anything other than music.

The explanation is honorable for its truth; Marion Hayden is indeed one busy woman. Hayden is also, despite the pride she takes in the label, far more than a mere “working” musician. Say her name in Detroit’s music circles and a chorus of reverent sentiments quickly starts to swirl.

Marion is a legend.

Marion is a master.

Marion is true Detroit.

Marion is the QOB: Queen of the Bass.

Praise for Hayden stretches well beyond Detroit, too, as she has devoted nearly three-quarters of her 68 years to a passion for playing jazz live on stages near and far, as well as being a sought-after player on a variety of jazz recordings.

During the phone call, Hayden confesses she’d rather focus only on playing music rather than the tedious tasks of managing her schedule. She also concedes to being “a little” nervous about the purpose of this particular call: A request to begin reflecting on a career clearly still in full swing. “The business has its vicissitudes,” she quips, likening the idea of sudden career reflection to her current wintry drive to an even colder part of the state. Hayden’s wit is overshadowed only by her sharp discipline.

Milestone moments are what keep Hayden energized and in relentless motion. Her zenith achievement, at least for now, arrived at the close of 2024. Much like an abrupt change in key within a sweeping composition, the moment rearranged Marion Hayden's entire world. In an instant, Marion Hayden, the proud working musician, suddenly became the 2025 Kresge Eminent Artist.

"I'm not a person who finds herself speechless much," she said, recalling her reaction to learning about the award, "but this is a real moment, kind of hard to process when you're just out doing the work, doing what you love."

Indeed, the Kresge Eminent Artist Award is a staggering honor, unrivaled in metro Detroit by the size of its unrestricted prize — \$100,000 — and the scale of attention bestowed upon the lives and creative achievements of some of metro Detroit's leading performing, visual, and literary artists.

Oddly enough, Hayden was in the midst of a rare, momentary break when she learned of her selection. She had just gifted herself a spur-of-the-moment visit to her favorite sushi restaurant. "I'd had such a long morning," Hayden said. "I told myself, today, girlfriend, you're getting something you really like. I was on a mission."

When she heard the words '2025 Kresge Eminent Artist,' she braced herself against a shelf, trying to absorb the details of the call. "I really wanted to have some sake," she recalled laughing, "but it was the middle of the day." She left with a bag of sushi, of course, and a stunning surprise.

"I've been poured into as a vessel by so many people for so many years," Hayden said. "I feel like now I'm at my pouring out stage. I'd like to see the younger generation benefit from some of the lessons I've learned and be enriched by the culture we have in the same way that Detroit stoked my creativity."

Marion Hayden and Charlie Gabriel.
Photo by W. Kim Heron.



Hayden's Time

Hayden is the 17th Kresge Eminent Artist. The award now tops a long list of her previous achievements, including a U.S. Congressional Commendation, a Spirit of Detroit Award, a 2024 Detroit ACE award, a 2023 New Music USA composition grant, and a 2022 Ron Brooks Award from the Southeast Michigan Jazz Association. In 2019, Hayden received an AXD grant, a successor to the better-known Art X Detroit series, as well as a Creators of Culture grant for original musical works. She was the artistic director for a 2018 Knight Arts Foundation grant that encouraged young women in jazz and a recipient of the Jazz Hero Detroit award, one of a number given by the National Jazz Journalists Association to those who have made a significant contribution through their artistry and community engagement.

Hayden's selection as a Kresge Eminent Artist carries a few notable distinctions. At 68, she is the youngest person, the first female musician and only the third jazz artist to receive the award. She's been a featured performer for tributes to at least four earlier Kresge Eminent Artists at their request. Hayden's dual commitment to craft and community is at the heart of why the award was created, says Kresge President and CEO Rip Rapson.

"Like all our Kresge Eminent Artists, she exemplifies how the arts ground and build a community, manifesting the powers of creativity to connect us."

From music peers and proteges to long-time mentors and friends, her selection as the 2025 Kresge Eminent Artist garnered thunderous support.

"No one is more deserving," said Rodney Whitaker, renowned fellow jazz bassist and director of jazz studies at Michigan State University (MSU). "Marion's someone everyone respects," he explained. "But she's not someone who's ever been given the true level of respect she deserves. This is a step in the right direction for the legacy she's built, the way she swings on the bandstand and gives back to the culture and the younger generation."

Longtime Detroit pianist and composer Buddy Budson is a go-to arranger for many of Hayden's live performance pieces. She considers him a decades-long mentor; he views her as a model for the impact of the arts. "Marion is more than just the music," he said. "When you're involved in projects with her, you see someone who lives for community, and the community lives in her. It's never just notes on paper. The music always has a really thought-out spirit of collaboration with an eye for others."



Members of the 2025 Kresge Eminent Artist selection panel note that her continued impact is so wide-ranging that she serves as a fitting example of The Kresge Foundation's ultimate aim: saluting the enduring effects of arts and culture in Detroit.

"She's such a deeply rooted community person, so ready and always willing to bring her creativity to wherever it's needed," said movement artist and Sidewalk Detroit founder Ryan Myers-Johnson. "What you also get from her is a deep love of craft at a very high level. She could easily be someone who is unapproachable to the community, but she doesn't have any kind of veil over who is worthy to hear her music."

Vincent Chandler, another panel member and an assistant professor of jazz studies at Wayne State University, said Hayden's selection elevates the award because she is still an active performer engaged simultaneously with preservation, education and community. "Marion is a hero who's still somewhat unsung on the larger scale under her own name," he said.

"The size of this award and the timing in her life really give her a chance to set herself up for a whole new level of success and exposure beyond the reputation she has for years of excellence on behalf of others."

Spend some time with Hayden, and you're quickly mesmerized by how gracefully she navigates between the demands of her days: the phone calls, emails, and text messages inviting her to perform at many of the city's major arts events and celebrations honoring local and visiting cultural icons. "It's not glamorous like people think when they're at a performance," she explains. "Music is a lot of work."

On many a night, the woman who morphed from a preteen cello lover into "champion of Detroit's bass tradition" is somewhere on a stage, fingers flying across the strings of her bass, making rhythm and harmony look effortless. The scene and high-flying energy remain the same whether Hayden is leading her ensemble, Legacy, performing live scores at film screenings, or more typically, gig-hopping with other local jazz artists and former students.

"It all goes together for Marion," said Ellen Rowe, a jazz pianist, composer and co-chair of the University of Michigan's (U-M) jazz studies department. "I'll see her out on a gig, and she'll purposefully use younger players so that she can actively mentor them right on the bandstand. That's how committed she is to making sure the legacy is passed on."

Indeed, jazz is the main rhythm of Hayden's life. But, she is also Marion Hayden the wife, married for 29 years to the painter and sculptor M. Saffell Gardner, and mother to two adult sons. Asukile, the elder, is a printmaker. Son Tariq is a jazz drummer, composer and group leader.

"She's lived a very busy and amazing life," Asukile says. "Just the level of drive and dedication that she put in, year after year, to performing and preserving relationships and building opportunities in the jazz community, and then balancing it all while raising a family; in hindsight, it's pretty superhuman."

Hayden herself marvels at the simultaneous ways she moves in the world. She plays.



The family, from left: son Asukile Gardner, Marion, husband M. Saffell Gardner, and son Tariq Gardner. Photo courtesy of Marion Hayden.

She teaches. She mentors. She gladly gigs and guest records with visiting legends and greats. Her living room is a well-known rehearsal space, where the furniture often takes a backseat to various musical instruments, including the requisite bass (she owns six), a piano, a drum set and any number of horns, depending on the cast of players practicing beside her.

“Growing up with her meant having the majority of the Detroit jazz community in your living room pretty much all the time, and you doing your homework in theirs,” notes Asukile. “At the time, as her kid, you’re not noticing the craziness or how hectic it must be for her, feeding you and your brother, then wrangling a band in the next room. Music is just her life, and she’s always made it work.”

Hayden calls her success a family endeavor. “My husband is the husband of a musician who struggles out the door with a big bass, and some nights is out till two in the morning playing. That’s a really great partner, and my children, they grew up watching the whole thing and accepting it as our life. That support is a large part of the reason I’ve been able to do so much for so long.”

In many ways, her selection as a Kresge Eminent Artist amplifies the depth and interconnectedness of Detroit’s artistic community, especially a longstanding tradition of jazz musicians educating and elevating younger generations. Hayden was a student and accompanist of two jazz greats (and Kresge Eminent Artists), the late legendary trumpeter Marcus Belgrave (2009) and the tenor saxophonist Wendell Harrison (2018). “She came through masters,” Harrison said.

His voice swells with pride discussing Hayden and her greatest accomplishment. “I’ve wanted this award for her for at least 10 years. She’s put in the years to be recognized like this. She’s worked herself into royalty.”

Harrison, who is 82, met Hayden in the late 1960s. He’d just moved back to Detroit after doing stints as a jazz accompanist in New York City and California. His good friend Belgrave insisted that he meet a then 15-year-old star named Marion. “You should’ve heard Marcus [Belgrave] or Roy [Brooks] or Harold McKinney talk about her. She’s got some of all of us in her, and she’s stayed true.”



Marion marks up music while working with her students at the University of Michigan. March 25. Photo by Erin Kirkland for The Kresge Foundation.

In the decades that followed their first meeting, Harrison also became a close mentor and bandmate to Hayden. She tapped him to produce her only solo recording, *Visions*. Of her early teachers, Harrison is the only one still living. "It's a blessing to see her out here still passing it on, getting some recognition and some real money too."

Hayden is unceasing in her praise of both Harrison and Belgrave's impact. And as she grew, Hayden says both men offered even greater guidance on how to build a thriving life in the business without having to choose between New York and Los Angeles. "This life, being creative and trying to make a living as a working musician, takes a lot of work, day after day, year after year," she said. "What people get to see and enjoy during a performance, that's just the tip of what it takes to keep going. I'm glad they showed me the other side."

Away from the bandstand, Hayden follows another aspect of her mentors' blueprint. She's a well-respected jazz educator with dual teaching posts at Oakland University and her alma mater, U-M. She earned her first faculty post in the late 1980s in the Jazz Department at Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland. When time allows, Hayden also fits in guest residencies at universities and colleges across the nation.

At U-M, she is the Geri Allen Collegiate Lecturer in the Department of Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation. When she was invited to teach there, it was Hayden who chose to name her new position in tribute to Allen, an acclaimed pianist, composer, and educator. Like Hayden, Allen studied with Belgrave. "We played together as young people and then later as adults, always proud of the tradition that we came from."

Since Allen had also taught at U-M for years before her death in 2017, Hayden seized the opportunity to create a permanent memorial to her contributions and her place in Detroit's jazz lineage.

"This life, being creative and trying to make a living as a working musician, takes a lot of work, day after day, year after year."



Above: Wendell Harrison (left) and Marion Hayden (right) with Detroit Public Schools students. Photo courtesy of Pamela Wise Harrison.

Left: Marion Hayden holds one of her six basses in January 2025.

“Geri was an important part of our legacy in Detroit and remained close to our community throughout her career,” Hayden said. “So, I took it as the honorific for my position, figuring at least every time a student or someone saw my name, they’d see the name Geri Allen and maybe have a reason to ask about her legacy.”

Hayden adds, “A big part of the jazz tradition in Detroit is remembering. We came from a lineage; we don’t just forget the people or the lessons. You keep it alive.”



This page: Marion Hayden with students at University of Michigan-Dearborn and pianist Johnny O’Neal. Photo courtesy of Marion Hayden.

Opposite, from top to bottom: Marion Hayden’s mother, Marion, with family members; Marion’s father, Herbert Hayden, instructing swim students; Marion’s mother holds her young brother Herbert with a young Marion looking on. Photos courtesy of Marion Hayden.



House Full of Culture

In the house where Marion Tecumseh Hayden grew up, a four-bedroom brick on Fullerton Street in Detroit's historic Russell Woods neighborhood, simple rules reigned. Family, culture, and community came first.



The Haydens loved their first-born child and the baby boy who eventually followed so much that they decided to give each child a permanent mark of distinction. When Marion was born on October 13, 1956, her father, Herbert Earl Hayden, “suggested that I be named after my mother.” Six years later, when the couple welcomed their second and only other child, “my mother suggested they name him after Daddy.”

As Hayden recalls, “I never heard any big reason other than it being just this loving choice that they made for their children. Family was very important to my parents.” The story that is less clear for Hayden is how the name Tecumseh first entered her family's history.

At some point, she hopes to explore whether Native American ancestry exists in her family, especially if there is a traceable connection to Tecumseh, the Shawnee chief who led a full-scale resistance movement to disrupt white settlers from taking over Native American land as part of the United States' early expansion.



By its meaning, “blazing comet,” the name Tecumseh more than fits both Hayden and the future her parents imagined for her, a hope that she'd rise without limit. Like many members of Detroit's Black middle class during the 1950s and 1960s, Herbert and Marion Hayden were determined, despite the segregation restrictions, to model social progress and pave the way for their children's future success.

Hayden's father was a diving and lifeguard certification instructor for Detroit's parks and recreation department. Her mother was a 1949 graduate of U-M with a degree in chemistry. She taught high school chemistry and often tutored neighborhood students who struggled with math from the family's dining room table.

“By the time they became parents, things had gotten a bit better than when they grew up during the Depression,” Hayden explained. “And with the Civil Rights Movement happening at the same time, it was just expected that if you were raising children in the Black community, you were exposing and preparing them for opportunities.”

Hayden remembers her neighborhood as a “lovely little fairytale” place where the families were “intact” and hardworking professionals, all Black, and owned their homes. “I didn’t feel isolated. My parents were used to a world where they didn’t get access to white folks,” she said. “This was just a holdover from what they knew, and it had everything we needed. My physicians were Black. My church was Black. My schools were Black. We had Vaughn’s Bookstore.”

On block after block, she recalls doctors, lawyers, teachers, and lots of boys and girls who, like the Hayden children, were ferried back and forth to dance and music lessons. In the Hayden house, where young Marion took on the nickname “MT,” dinner was planned and enjoyed together. “My mother was organized to the point that she would actually cook meals days ahead of time, freeze them on the weekdays, and have a menu posted on the fridge. You always knew what was for dinner.”

Hayden’s younger brother, Herbert, says their mother’s attention to detail and constant learning is evident in the way Marion has approached her music career. “She’s always in motion, with her hands in something different, mastering whatever she touches, just like our mother.”

Today, Herbert Hayden Jr. describes himself as one of MT’s biggest and proudest fans. But he concedes, jokingly, that he did not always believe in her musical skills. In the house on Fullerton, where their bedrooms were side by side, he longed for his big sister to choose another hobby.

Listening to Marion’s early years of practicing was “excruciating,” he laughingly recalled. “She’d be in there just squeaking and squawking; I vividly remember asking my mother several times, ‘Mom, when is she gonna stop playing that stuff; it sounds awful.’” In his mother’s reply, Herbert says, was an early insight into his sister’s longevity and ultimate success as a jazz musician and bandleader. “Mom told me, ‘Herbie, you have to practice to get better, and as she practices, she’s not gonna be good, she’s gonna be great.’”

Of course, young Herbert was not so sure: “In my mind, I was like, if she sounds terrible now, it’s never gonna happen.” Yet, decade after decade, the baby brother has had to relent. Marion’s transition from aspiring cellist to determined, groundbreaking bassist made him a full believer. During her high school years, Herbert would join his parents at performances, often struck by his sister’s singularity. “Sometimes, she’d be the only female on stage and she never let it stop her.”



Left: Marion performing with pianist Geri Allen in Detroit.

Below: A high school portrait.



If their mother were alive, Herbert says she would sum up Marion's rise with a single word, the one she insisted upon from the dinner table to their educational aspirations: preparation.

"My sister literally spent years laying the groundwork for this moment, honing her craft, always practicing even when it didn't sound good," he said. "I know my mother would be beaming for MT. She's been queen of the bass for a long time; now she's finally getting her crown."



An infant Marion Hayden with her father, Herbert Earl Hayden.

Down in the Basement; Up With Jazz

“Nobody was trying to make a musician in the family,” Hayden says.

The way Marion remembers, her love affair with jazz began slowly, way down in the basement, unbeknownst to her or her parents. The sounds of Motown were ubiquitous throughout the house — saxophones, pianos. As a child of the times, Marion knew the music and its dance moves, too. But her ears and her heart belonged to a different, older, richer sound.

She didn’t notice at the time, but the records tucked beneath her arms were usually an assortment of her father’s favorites. From bebop to big band records, Herbert Hayden owned and listened to some form of jazz almost daily. “When my father would go outside to work on the lawn, he had a little speaker he would take with him to play Miles while he was mowing.”

Her father’s record collection was enormous, featuring the regular rotation of jazz giants like Duke Ellington, Oscar Peterson, Charles Mingus and Miles Davis. “He didn’t know that what he was doing was really shaping me,” Hayden explained. “He was just playing what he loved.”

Her father’s love became hers, too. “He never said I couldn’t touch his music; I just took what I liked, went to the basement, and started playing. He brought me into the music in such an organic way; it went right into my soul. I couldn’t stop listening. Really, he gave me a gift.”

For Hayden, a self-professed “daddy’s girl,” the gift was both metaphorical and literal. “He bought me my first bass.”

The bass was where Marion turned, around age 10, after first trying to mimic the sounds she heard playing on a cello. For a brief moment, she tried her hand at the piano, too, since both her parents played at home on a piano her father had inherited. “My father was a closet pianist; jazzy blues was his thing,” Hayden recalled. “I don’t know why he hid it.”

Hayden’s mother, the high school chemistry teacher and science department head, loved Gershwin and mainly played classical standards.

But unlike either of her parents, Hayden could not connect with the piano. Neither the sound nor her mother's teaching style clicked. "Trying to learn something from your parent can be difficult," she said and laughed.

Still determined to play an instrument, young Marion joined the band on cello at Detroit's Admiral Albert G. Winterhalter Elementary School and continued on at Miller Junior High School.

While classroom lessons focused on classical notes, at home, Hayden was fixated on finding a way to mimic the rich rhythms she heard listening to her father's music. "I would've played the bass then, but they didn't have any little basses," she said, referring to the now-shuttered school. "I had to wait until I was 12 because I was tall enough then to stand up to a bass."

Once the spark took hold, Hayden burrowed into every detail of the instrument, attaching herself as if she'd suddenly grown a fifth limb. "I went from being just this crazy little kid who was always playing to a very determined young musician," she said. "I just fell in love with everything about the sound, the music; I wanted to really be good at what I was doing, to the point that the bass just became my thing, a real part of me."

Her father took notice and responded by enrolling teenage Marion in the Metro Arts program. This summer music program would introduce her to many of her mentors, including Belgrave, Harrison, McKinney, and other local music luminaries.

By age 15, Hayden was thoroughly engrossed, standing out each time she stepped forward to play. But the man who'd made much of it possible did not live to see her rise. Herbert Hayden Sr. died when Hayden was just 16 years old.

"He never got to see the fruit of all that he planted, taking me to pick out my first bass and just giving me so much opportunity to be engaged with jazz. I credit my father with so much of my start."

Hayden drew even closer after her father's death, deepening her practice and study of jazz throughout her high school years, first at Cass Tech High School, where Belgrave was the artist-in-residence. She later transferred to and graduated from Henry Ford High School. In 1973, when it was time to attend college, she followed in her mother's footsteps and enrolled at U-M.





Playing with Stanley Booker at Hart Plaza at the "Pyramid Stage" at the Detroit Jazz Festival, circa 1983.

However, instead of music, she chose a concentration in journalism with a minor in entomology. "I was still trying to get this level of stability that my very stable Black family required of me," she said, explaining her choice not to major in music. "As much as they loved me and supported my love of the music, they felt it was not steady," she recalled, quickly adding, "and they were 100% right." (Hayden's mother eventually found love again and remarried.)

Hayden's educational compromise never stopped the music. "I was living two different identities," Hayden said. Although she pursued graduate studies in natural sciences — a year at U-M and two years at MSU — and landed a job with the Michigan Department of Agriculture inspecting landscape plants for pests and diseases for a decade, Marion played on, sitting in on as many jazz sets across Detroit as she could accept at one time.

"I reached a point where I realized that I had to put on my parachute and leap," she said. "Really, I think all artists have to make peace with the fact that the arts are not the most stable way to make a living. But that doesn't mean you can't be successful, be fulfilled, or have a meaningful, lifelong career."

Hayden's roadmap started with guest accompanying stints across the city, playing alongside Belgrave, Teddy Harris Jr., Kenn Cox and others in some of Detroit's most storied jazz clubs, including Baker's Keyboard Lounge,¹ Bert's, and Dummy George's.

On those stages, she built a reputation that continues to follow her today, widely recognized as a first-call bassist and a multifaceted creative pioneer. "I was a very serious young woman on that bass," she said. "I didn't want the center of attention to be the fact that I was a woman; I wanted desperately to just be a part of the band. My playing was the only focal point I cared about." Her focus was so intense that Hayden rarely bothered with makeup or any sign of glamour. "I used to have to remind myself to smile."

Whitaker remembers "sneaking" out of the house and into jazz clubs just to hear Hayden. An aspiring bassist himself at the time, he was mesmerized by her "groove" and her omnipresence.

"It was like she had all the gigs in town," says Whitaker. In the late 1980s and early '90s, Hayden was in such demand that she tapped Whitaker as her chosen "deputy" for any gig she couldn't accommodate.

¹ Baker's Keyboard Lounge is considered the world's oldest continuously operating jazz club, started in 1934 in northwest Detroit.

“Even when she was in school getting her master’s, she made herself number one by driving back and forth, always prepared to play gigs at the top level. She had so much work; she never had to leave to make her name,” Whitaker said. “She was already Marion Hayden.”

Somewhat accidentally, Hayden also made a bit of music history in the late 1980s. She was a founding member of Straight Ahead, a groundbreaking Detroit-based ensemble lauded as the first all-female jazz group to be signed to Atlantic Records and one of the few all-female jazz groups to record for a major label since the big band era. Straight Ahead launched the solo career of violinist Regina Carter, a MacArthur Genius Award recipient. The group continues to perform in Detroit and beyond.

The Grammy-nominated group was established by Detroit singer Mische Braden. At the time, Braden was the only woman in another ensemble that landed a major performance without including her. In response, she invited Hayden, drummer Gayelynn McKinney and pianist and arranger Alina Morr, to help her showcase the full power of women musicians. The group officially formed after they landed a standing gig at Bert’s, playing a wide-ranging mix of standards and jazz with hints of other music styles. Braden eventually left Detroit to pursue a career in musical theater, but not before adding another dimension by welcoming Carter and her violin. Carter’s addition cemented the group’s acclaim on the jazz festival circuit and paved the way for three albums with Atlantic Records.

But looking back, it was a shared love of jazz and Marion Hayden’s well-established track record that gave Straight Ahead its focus and advantage. “Marion had already been on the scene in Detroit so long that she had great relationships and that was a big benefit to us,” said Morr.

“Other than Mische, I don’t think any of us had the idea of wanting to start an all-women’s jazz band. We just wanted to play jazz at a high level, which we were already doing on our own. Fortunately, we clicked as a group, too. The whole gender thing is something other people got hold of and just ran away with.”

Hayden cherishes the groundbreaking nature of the group as an essential moment in her career, but making great music and memories on the bandstand is what she wants to be known for most.



Left: Marion, center, with friends and holding her younger son, Tariq Gardner, outside Detroit's State Theater, 1990.

Below: A flyer advertising the release and performances of Straight Ahead's 1999 release "City Cuts." Flyer courtesy of Marion Hayden.

"Anyone who's truly trailblazing," she says, "is probably just being themselves. Working to stay true," she explains. "That's what my practice as a bassist has always been about: making sure that I'm doing what I absolutely love. When you're an artist of any kind, you have to do it for yourself first. It's what I was focused on then, and it's what's still driving me."

Standard Strong

On her lone solo recording, *Visions*, Marion Hayden is front and center, swinging, thumping, and grooving, daring the listener not to be swayed by her versatility, her beautiful arpeggios, and forays into freer jazz spaces.

But only the longtime Hayden fan or jazz aficionado catches the album's quiet but distinct detail: Hayden the composer is present on one song, an aspect of her career that she hopes to make more known soon. She is preparing to begin updating her composition catalog, including plans to eventually record. From the comfort of her





Marion's first professional artist portrait.
Photo courtesy of Marion Hayden.

living room, she has written more than 60 pieces of music, including “Ocean: The Life and Times of Phillis Wheatley,” who, during the colonial era, became the first African American to publish a book of poetry.

Unfortunately, most of Hayden’s original works remain unrecorded. The prospect of bringing her compositions to life had become merely a dream, too costly in time and money for Hayden to ponder seriously.

Suddenly, she is plotting and planning with a new sense of joy, a perk of her unexpected Kresge windfall. “I think everyone has things they’d like to do one day,” Hayden said. “But you don’t stop to think about them actually being possible until something like this happens to you.”

Between the gigs, which are still too plentiful to pass up, Hayden is slowly beginning to craft a vision for what her next chapter will include. “As a working musician, I wear so many hats joyfully and lovingly,” she said. “But I could use some help. With this award, that’s one of the things I hope to finally do.”

For decades, Hayden has juggled every detail of her music career: emailing, phoning, texting, scheduling, negotiating contracts, hiring other musicians, assembling music, securing rehearsal space (when her living room proved too small) and, of course, always finding solo time to perfect her playing.

“One thing I know is, I am capable of doing it,” she said. “But some of those things don’t all need to be done by me. It’s taken me maybe 30 years or more to get it, but I can see the benefit of finally handing some of it off to someone else who’s also capable and who understands something of the business part of the music business.”

Of course, if her husband had his way, Hayden would seize her Kresge Eminent Artist moment to put one priority above everything.

“The first thing I thought when she got [the Kresge award] was, OK, maybe now she can stop being the roadrunner that she is,” he said. “I’d love to see her take a year off and put everything down for some Marion time.”

Gardner, himself a busy visual artist and adjunct professor, is a frequent collaborator with Hayden, sometimes painting live on stage during performances. Most often, he’s a fan in the audience and a creative sounding board.

“As far as I’m concerned, she’s already the face of Detroit’s jazz legacy, the jazz soldier everybody sees on the scene,” he said. “But she still thinks she’s not doing enough, or she could do better. I hope she lets the recognition sink in and change things up.”

By the handwritten marks on her personal calendar, Marion Hayden has no imminent plans to slow down. “Getting this award is something I’d like to think would give her room to breathe,” says son and jazz drummer Tariq, one of her most frequent accompanists. “But I can see even with it, she’s still busy as ever. Being on the bandstand is what she’s wired to do.”

Gigs of every size, with community appearances mixed in, are inked for Hayden into 2026, with the door still open for more. Yet she insists: “I do want to eventually do some things differently,” she said just before a scheduled trip for a weekend residency at the Berklee School of Music in Boston. “I may become a little more selective. I may not want to keep hitting the ground running so hard.”

Hayden interrupts herself with a cautionary insight. As much as she’s basking in the award’s attention and the newfound possibilities, the standard for her life cannot be undone.

“My training was as a player first. I learned from people who expected you to get in there and play. Everything I do comes from that perspective,” she said.

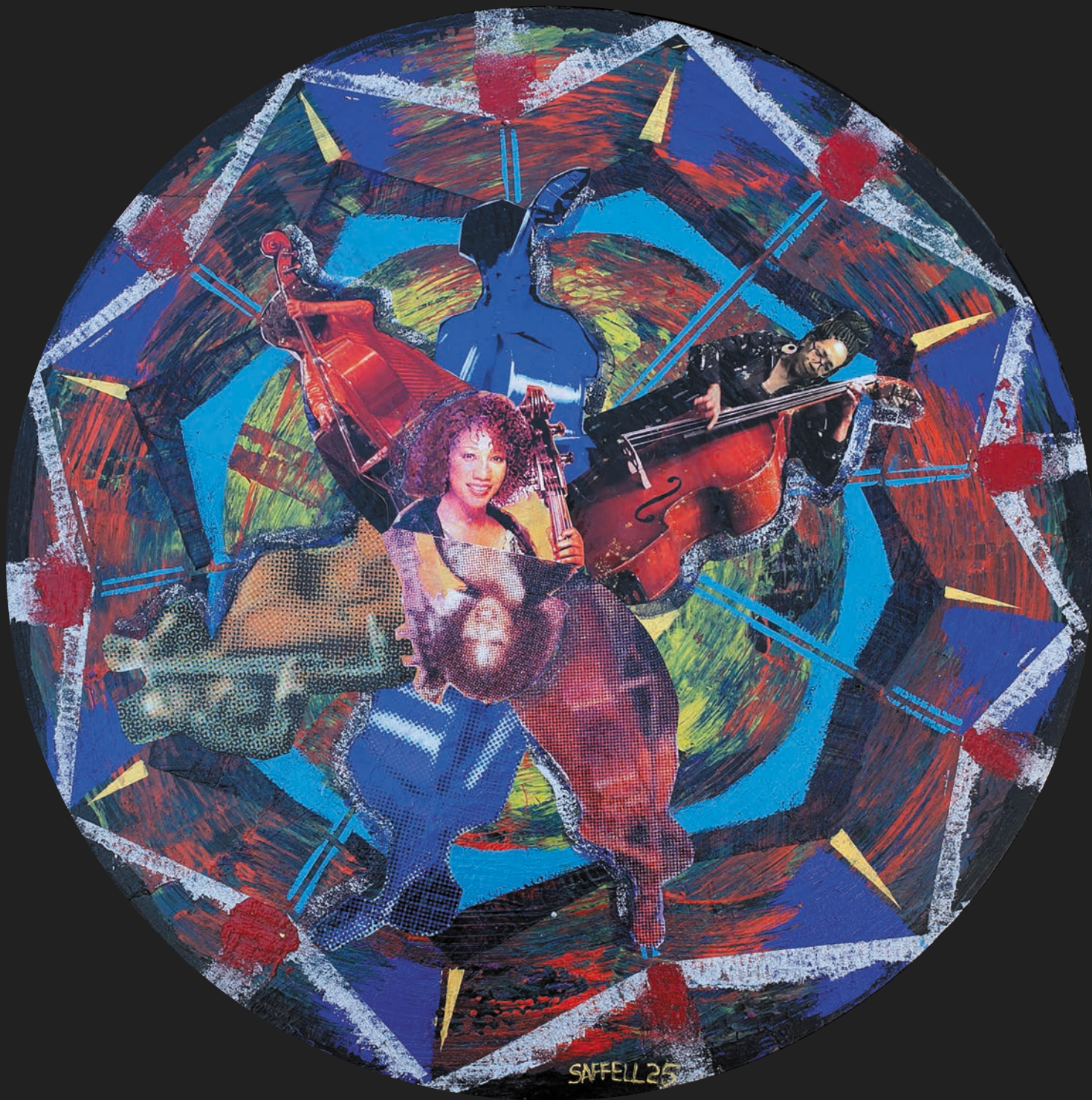
The closest Hayden has ever come to a full professional stop was during the pandemic. “Not being able to go out and play live with folks for several months was a horrible feeling,” she said. “I don’t ever want to take for granted the opportunity to play music live and what it does for me.”

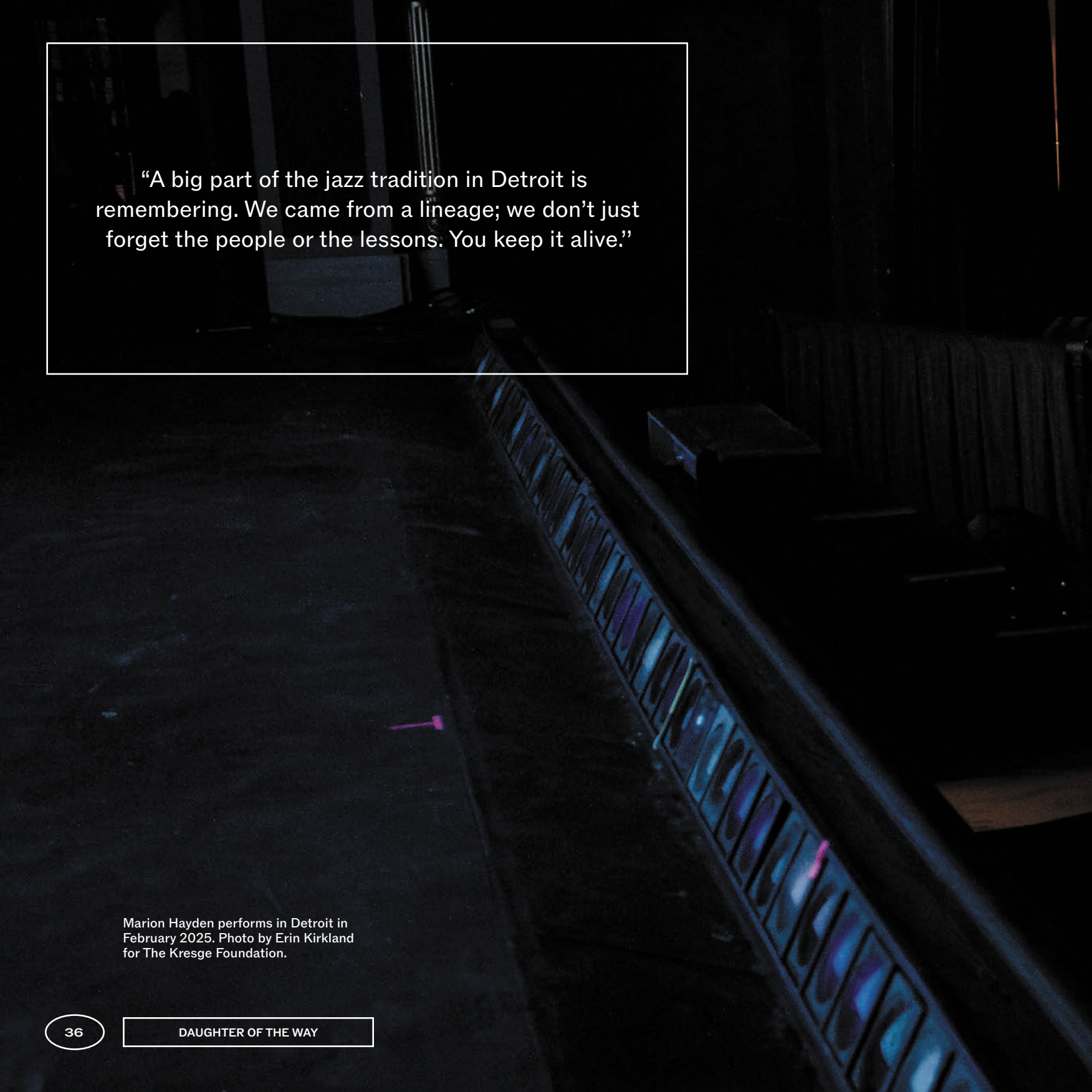
She felt the absence of live performance so acutely that it rekindled her early commitment. “This is not a job,” she said. “I need to be in the company of other musicians sharing ideas. I like being a practicing, working musician. I’m not ready to stop being true to who I am. I’m still working on some things.”

Nichole M. Christian is a writer and veteran journalist. She is the creative director, editor and lead writer of six past Kresge Foundation Eminent Artist monographs: *Su Arte, Su Vida* (2024), honoring Nora Chapa Mendoza; *The Book of Melba* (2023), honoring Melba Joyce Boyd; *The Culture Keeper* (2022), honoring Olayami Dabls; *A Palette for The People* (2021), honoring painter and educator Shirley Woodson; *Wonder and Flow* (2020), honoring ceramicist Marie Woo; and *A Life Speaks* (2019), honoring poet and activist Gloria House. Nichole is also the co-author of *Canvas Detroit*, and a frequent essayist for M Contemporary Art, a gallery in Ferndale, Michigan. She has written for the PBS American Masters Series.

Her writing also appears in the poetry chapbook *Cypher, summer 2021*; *Portraits 9/11/01: The Collected “Portraits of Grief”* from The New York Times; the online arts journal *Essay’d*; *A Detroit Anthology*, and *Dear Dad: Reflections on Fatherhood*.

Opposite: *QOB Mandala*, painting, 2025 by M. Saffell Gardner.





“A big part of the jazz tradition in Detroit is remembering. We came from a lineage; we don’t just forget the people or the lessons. You keep it alive.”

Marion Hayden performs in Detroit in February 2025. Photo by Erin Kirkland for The Kresge Foundation.

HAYDEN'S ORBIT



mark stryker

Jazz musicians from Detroit know they bear a heavy responsibility to live up to the legacy of a city that has produced some of the most innovative and influential players in jazz history. As I often say, you can't tell the history of jazz without telling the history of jazz from Detroit. But what of, specifically, bass players from Detroit? Well, the burden has now increased another tenfold. Maybe a hundredfold.

Imagine aspiring to become a writer and your father is William Faulkner, your mother is Toni Morrison, your uncle is Ralph Ellison, and your brother is Ernest Hemingway. That's a bit like being a Detroit-bred bassist whose lineage has provided the foundation for some of the greatest music of the 20th century and continues to play a leading role on the contemporary scene.

Detroit bass players, from left: James Jamerson of Motown, circa 1965 (photo by Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images); Paul Chambers in Tokyo, 1964 (photo by K. Abe/Shinko Music/Getty Images); Ron Carter at Park West Auditorium in Chicago in 1981 (photo by Paul Natkin/Getty Images).



Start with the Big 3

Paul Chambers was *the* defining bassist in jazz from 1955-62, a member of the Miles Davis Quintet and a contributor to hundreds of recordings, many of them classics. Ron Carter, who, like Chambers, attended Cass Technical High School in Detroit, set new standards for the bass as a member of Davis' groundbreaking quintet in the 1960s and holds the title of the most recorded bassist in jazz history – and Carter still plays at an insanely high level in his late 80s. Meanwhile, James Jamerson, who trained as an upright bassist in jazz, switched to the electric bass and became the house bassist for Motown Records, appearing on scores of iconic hits and defining the sound of the bass in soul music.



Now, consider the many other Detroit bassists who have also left an indelible mark on jazz from the 1940s to the present day. Name any style – bebop, hard bop, post-bop, free jazz, fusion, funk, all manner of contemporary currents – and Detroiters have been in the mix: Al McKibbin, Major Holley, Gene Taylor, Will Austin, Ernie Farrow, Doug Watkins, Cecil McBee, Cameron Brown, Michael Henderson, Jaribu Shahid, Ralphe Armstrong, Robert Hurst and Rodney Whitaker. Turn on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* and note the bassist when the camera pans to the band. Yeah, that young woman playing the hell out of the instrument is a Detroit jazz musician too: Endea Owens.

Marion Hayden, the 2025 Kresge Eminent Artist, embodies this profound heritage with an artistry that honors the special fraternity to which she belongs. Every time she picks up her instrument, the DNA of the Detroit jazz bass tradition flows through her sound, carrying the soulful oxygen of swing, blues, harmonic sophistication and melodic invention. Plus, one more element that’s harder to quantify but common to the bloodline: the subtle, even mystical, ability to unify a band on the fly, to make one out of many, to forge community.

Among her Detroit predecessors, Hayden’s most important avatar in channeling these qualities is surely Ron Carter. Like him, she is not a flashy player who brandishes speed or fireworks to attract attention. While she certainly gets around the bass with fluency, Hayden is most concerned with the fundamentals of sound, time, groove and playing the right note at the right time to best serve the music and convey emotion.

Those skills have endeared her to bandleaders from inside and outside Detroit, from her mentors like trumpeter Marcus Belgrave and pianist Kenn Cox to visiting stars like pianist Hank Jones and alto saxophonist Charles McPherson.

A bassist carries an exceptional amount of weight in a modern jazz rhythm section. She must delineate the harmony of a song, anchor the pulse and time of the band, play melodic walking lines, and form a superglue bond with the drummer while also negotiating ever-shifting, individual relationships with the pianist and horn soloists.

A good place on record to hear how Hayden manages these responsibilities is the 2015 compilation *Detroit Jazz City* (Blue Note), a celebration of the city’s jazz tradition that – alongside archival selections – pairs a locally sourced house rhythm section, anchored by Hayden, with a diverse cast of Detroit-bred soloists. Listen, for example, to the dark chocolate tone and plummy legato she slaps on her leisurely walking beat behind veteran singer Sheila Jordan on the autobiographical “Sheila’s Blues.”



Upper Left: Artwork for Hayden's 2007 solo album *Visions*.

Upper Right: Artwork for the 2015 compilation album *Detroit Jazz City*, produced by Blue Note President Don Was. © Blue Note Records.

Hayden isn't just in the groove here. She's *defining* it, almost imperceptibly leading her gifted but less experienced colleagues to the promised land of the pocket. She gently nudges drummer Sean Dobbins forward toward the middle of the beat and slyly tugs pianist Mike Jellick back from the front side of the beat. At the same time, her quarter notes, ornamental skips and triplets find a melodic path of feeling through the blues that complements Jordan's discursive improvising.

On the medium-tempo swinger "Many Blessings," with volatile saxophonist James Carter out front, Hayden struts like an uptown hipster. The more Carter's soprano saxophone brays and barks, the deeper Hayden digs into the beat, securing the foundation with an intensity that allows Jellick and, especially, Dobbins the freedom to push Carter into the stratosphere. The clarity, intent and potency of Hayden's basslines actively shape the performance. Her own solo is a model of lucid restraint, the necessary calm after Carter's dizzying storm.

Hayden's quiet strength and ability to match the moment are calling cards. So is her skill in striking a groove with an array of individualistic drummers, which is not as easy as it may seem at first blush. Surveying her discography, it's striking how comfortable she sounds in tandem with different drummers, each of whom addresses matters of time, rhythmic displacement, dynamics, texture and timbre from a unique perspective.

It's about modeling communication, connection and the creation of the unified sound of a band.

On *Visions*, Hayden's 2007 debut recording as a leader, drummer Ralph Peterson Jr. plays like a volcano erupting, but Hayden always maintains her equilibrium. Listen to how effectively she drafts on Peterson's explosive power during the vamp sections on "Mr. Kenyatta," and then how she not only matches the drummer's fury when the rhythm switches into swing but how the passion of her beat drives him into an even more vehement gear.

Another nuclear drummer, Cindy Blackman, requires a different tack. She brings tremendous excitement and energy to the music but can sometimes bully bandmates with her thundering volume and relentless, on-top-of-the-beat time feel. Throughout a diversity of material, rhythms and moods on guitarist Paul Abler's 1997 recording *In the Marketplace*, Hayden consistently commits to a lane in sync with Blackman



Paul Abler and Marion Hayden.
Photographer unknown.

but lays back just enough to make sure that the music doesn't rush forward in a way that leaves the rest of the group behind. On Doug Hammond's *It's Born* from 1996, the exploratory drummer and bandleader's sharp-angled rhythms, odd meters, hide-and-seek approach to the beat, and surprising use of space present the challenge of beguiling abstraction. Hayden sounds at home here, too, navigating Hammond's rhythmic mazes with basslines that balance formal structure and spontaneous intuition, while also providing the harmony in the absence of a chordal instrument like piano or guitar.

Spending time with the recordings is one way to appreciate Hayden's art but even more instructive is to go hear her play in person. Watch and listen to how she puts her stamp on the music without demanding the spotlight: the intensity with which she listens and reacts to her bandmates, the confidence of her beat, the understated adjustments she makes in the moment to clarify the harmony or the time if the music has started to slip sideways. Note how she leads by example and how musicians – veterans and young players alike – rally around her like a baseball team that loves and respects its manager.

Ultimately, Hayden is a connector in the manner of the distinguished Detroit bassists whose legacy she has inherited and now perpetuates. She links her bandmates to each other in ways that manifest a group sound, identity and expression. That unity is what allows the music to leap across the footlights to move an audience, whose emotional engagement then ricochets back to the bandstand to inspire the musicians.

Think of it as a noble feedback loop, and think of Hayden as one of its most important contemporary architects on the scene today in Detroit.

Mark Stryker, a 2012 Kresge Artist Fellow, is the author of *Jazz from Detroit* (University of Michigan Press, 2019) and the writer and co-producer of the documentary film *The Best of the Best: Jazz from Detroit* (2024).

regina carter

Marion Hayden's humility is remarkable. I sometimes wonder if she fully grasps how widely admired she is as a powerhouse bassist.

Marion *is* the bass. The bass is Marion.

At the Detroit Jazz Festival a few summers ago, I ran into bassist John Patitucci.¹ Mid-conversation, he lit up and said, "The bass player— Marion—I love her playing!" Of course, I called Marion right then and there, handed John the phone, and listened to an exchange of mutual respect between two master musicians. She doesn't realize how far her reputation goes.

Plenty of us—including legendary bassist Ron Carter—hoped Marion would move to New York to further her career. Every time I'd run into Maestro Carter, he'd ask without fail, "When is Marion moving to New York?" But Marion chose to stay rooted in Detroit, where she's carried on the rich tradition of mentoring young musicians while balancing her career, family, and community ties.

She's a historian with the music and what it means for generations. Detroit is still a great place to be from and to come through as a musician. Some places people leave, and you say it used to be a great music city. Detroit continues to have that legacy. The fact that Marion keeps up with its history and keeps it going is important to who she is and to the way that this music was originally passed on, through true mentoring. All of this is Marion Hayden. You can't separate the music from the culture, and Marion hasn't.

Step into the home she shares with her husband, mixed media artist and painter M. Saffell Gardner, and you'll find a space infused with music. Whether it's Marion rehearsing one of her many projects, her son's band or friends rehearsing and jamming, or a student group learning under her guidance, their home echoes the spirit of legendary house sessions—like the ones Barry Harris used to describe, where musicians would gather, exchange ideas, and push each other to new heights.

¹ John Patitucci is a four-time Grammy Award-winning acoustic and electric bass player. He is also a professor of jazz studies at City College of New York.



Marion with Regina Carter and others at Baker's Keyboard Lounge in Detroit circa 1988. Photo courtesy of Regina Carter.

If you'd ever had the joy of spending time with Marion's parents, you'd understand exactly what helped shape her into the phenomenal woman, musician, teacher, friend, sister, wife, and mother she is today. Our families have been connected for generations. Our parents first met as youngsters at Green Pastures Camp in Michigan, fostering a friendship that lasted a lifetime. We grew up together at Plymouth Congregational Church of Christ, where Marion and my brothers bonded in youth group, while her younger brother and I shared the same Sunday school class.

I got to know Marion as an adult and professional musician in 1989 when I joined Straight Ahead, a band she co-founded. From the start, I was in awe of her incredible talent as a bassist, as well as her versatility as a composer and her sharp business savvy. I looked up to her then, and I still do now. Intelligent, gifted, hardworking, kind, beautiful, and gracious are just a few words that barely begin to capture her spirit. And let me tell you—Marion can even throw down in the kitchen, y'all!

Dear Marion, you are truly a treasure! Your remarkable talent, uplifting spirit, and unwavering dedication to supporting and nurturing others continues to leave a lasting impact that extends far beyond the bandstand.

Congratulations!



Regina Carter is a native Detroiter and acclaimed jazz violinist who has been awarded a MacArthur Fellowship (2007), and Doris Duke Award (2018), and honored as an NEA Jazz Master Fellow (2023). She is also on the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music faculty, where she teaches jazz performance, history, and urban musical culture courses.



An early group portrait of Marion with members of Straight Ahead. From left to right: Alina Morr (page 46), violinist Regina Carter; drummer Gayelynn McKinney; and vocalist Miche Braden.

LESSONS IN LINEAGE

48

MARION HAYDEN



When Marion Hayden picks up her bass, she is never alone. Each note is informed and energized by decades of lessons learned while playing beside many of Detroit's most notable jazz legends and masters.

Here, she speaks with editor Nichole Christian about some of her key mentors and their unique impact on her longevity as a musician and her commitment to passing on Detroit's jazz legacy.

"I started to think about how much music I had absorbed over the course of decades. It was a big turning point where I felt like I was going to have to share what I'd learned with whoever would listen or allow me. Their music and their lessons about having a life in music couldn't die with them."

marcus belgrave
1936–2015



**Master trumpeter, local jazz educator, 2009
Kresge Eminent Artist, accompanist for an
array of music greats including Ray Charles,
Charles Mingus and Max Roach.**

Marcus was a person who would put music in front of you that was way above your headspace. He would make an assessment that you would be able to rise to the piece that was in front of you. That was kind of how he did things. He would expect that you could take any piece and rise up to that level while you were doing it.

A lot of the teaching came in the context of learning the music. He would talk about the music in rehearsals and have the opportunity to learn details through the work. That was a very, very powerful way to get the music. But you had to really have your stuff together. He really expected a level of mastery from us when we were working with him, which was good because someone has to have expectations of you if you're going to get any better.

I also learned a lot about the importance of choosing personnel from Marcus and some real secrets about smart contracting, too. Marcus was really smart about making sure to have someone who could always pivot musically. When you're playing for folks, sometimes you show up, and all of a sudden, someone wants you to play dance music. Marcus always had people with broad capabilities. It was one of the great lessons that I got from watching how he did things, as well as absorbing tremendous amounts of really bedrock-level repertoire, especially when he was doing Louis Armstrong's repertoire.

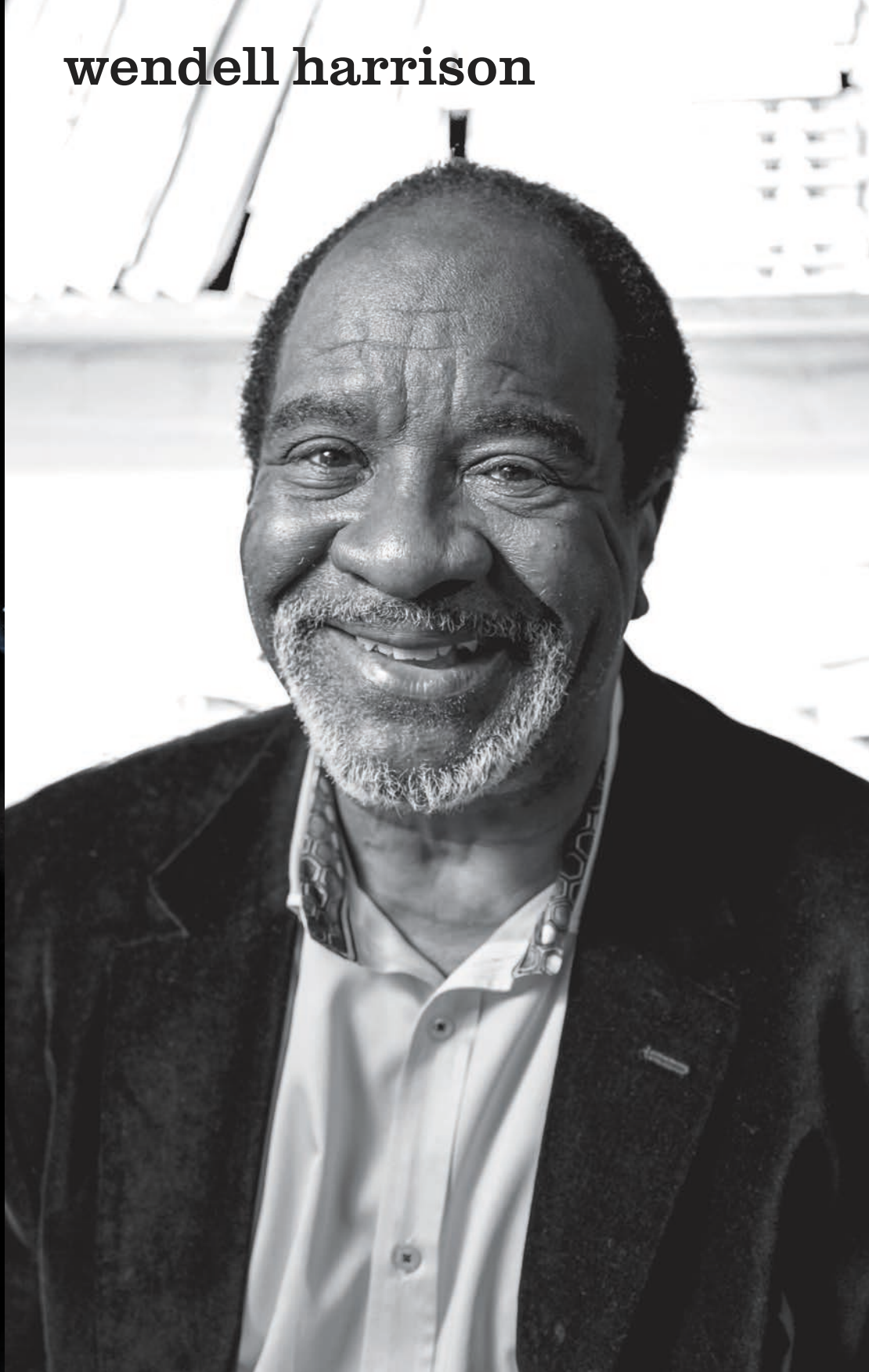
Marcus also had a particular determination when it came to rehearsing. He had a saying: the rehearsal is more important than the gig. I remember when Marcus told me that. I was a full-grown person with two kids and was caring for my mother. I didn't say this to Marcus, but I wasn't exactly interested in hearing about unpaid rehearsals being more important than paid gigs. I laugh now, thinking how much he was right; it couldn't be a bigger truth.

I give that to my students right now. What Marcus meant is that the level of preparation you put into making the music reflects on us as artists, whether or not the actual performance goes down. The rehearsal is where all of the communication and the discovery happen. By the time you get to the performance, it's too late to talk about the music.

Marcus knew so much about the music. So many times I wish I could call him today just to talk and continue learning.

LESSONS IN LINEAGE

wendell harrison



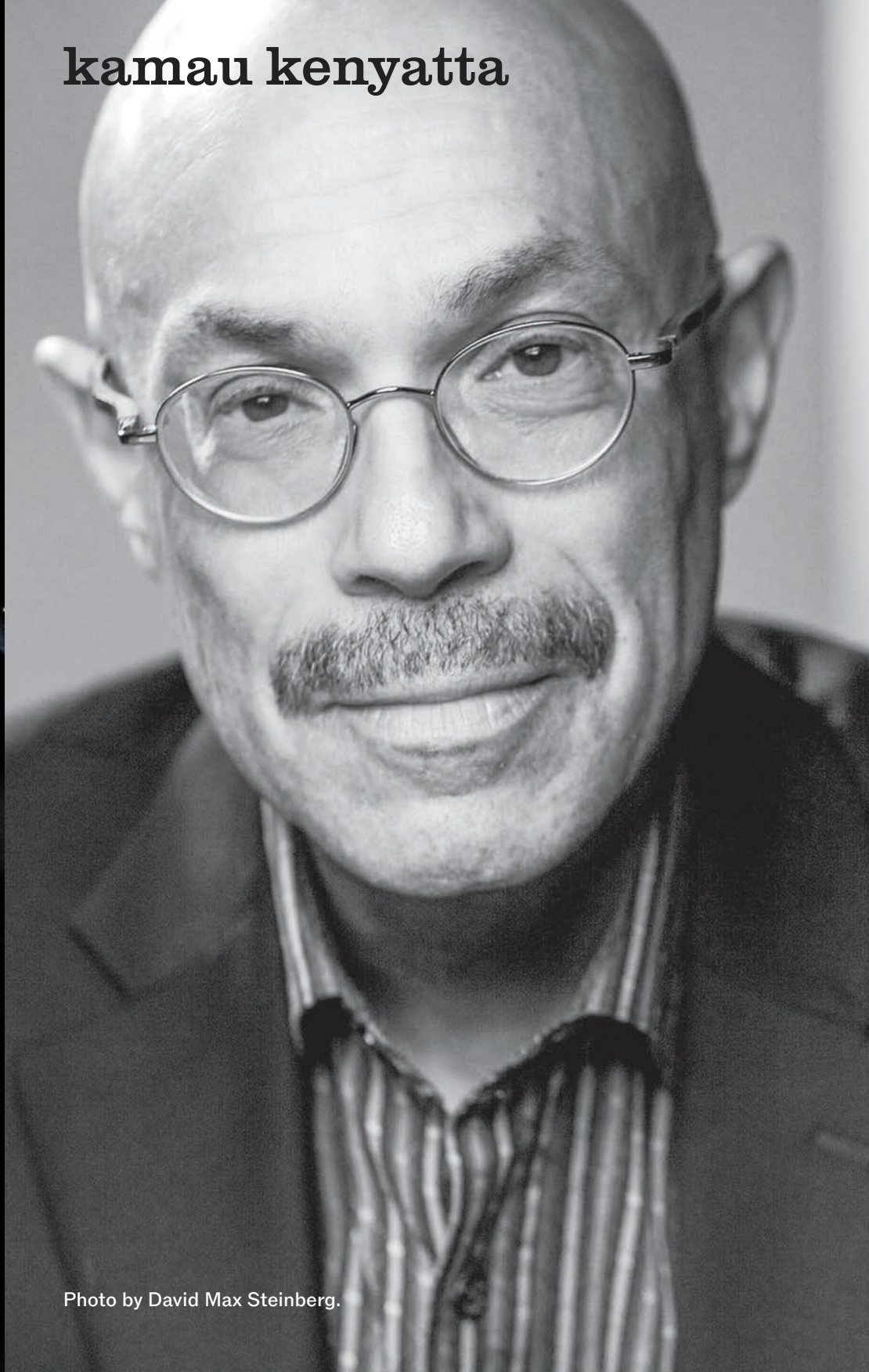
**Jazz clarinetist and tenor saxophonist,
composer, bandleader, educator, organizer
and 2018 Kresge Eminent Artist.**

First, I love Wendell's playing. I also have a deep respect for Wendell as someone who knows how to get it done. He's very savvy in that way. He's always had this wonderful grasp of the business side to go along with his beautiful musical acumen, and he shares what he knows so freely. Any ideas that Wendell has for anything are going to get done. He is also an important early model for me of not sitting and waiting for someone to give me permission in this business. He sets a standard.

I've had a chance to do a lot of really, really great projects with Wendell over the years. One was a grant that Wendell got to do live performances on the radio, on WDET. He just brought in a variety of people. It was just fantastic. Wendell understands how important range is, and he has the ability to build relationships that can help make the music better. So much of this business is about that: people and relationships.

Also, my one solo record was produced by Wendell. We actually co-produced it together, and it was such a joy to do it with him and to see all the great folks that he was able to bring to the table to do the record. How he's led his life as a working musician is a great template for the many ways that one can have a real life in the business. He continues to be someone that I can ask questions of.

kamau kenyatta



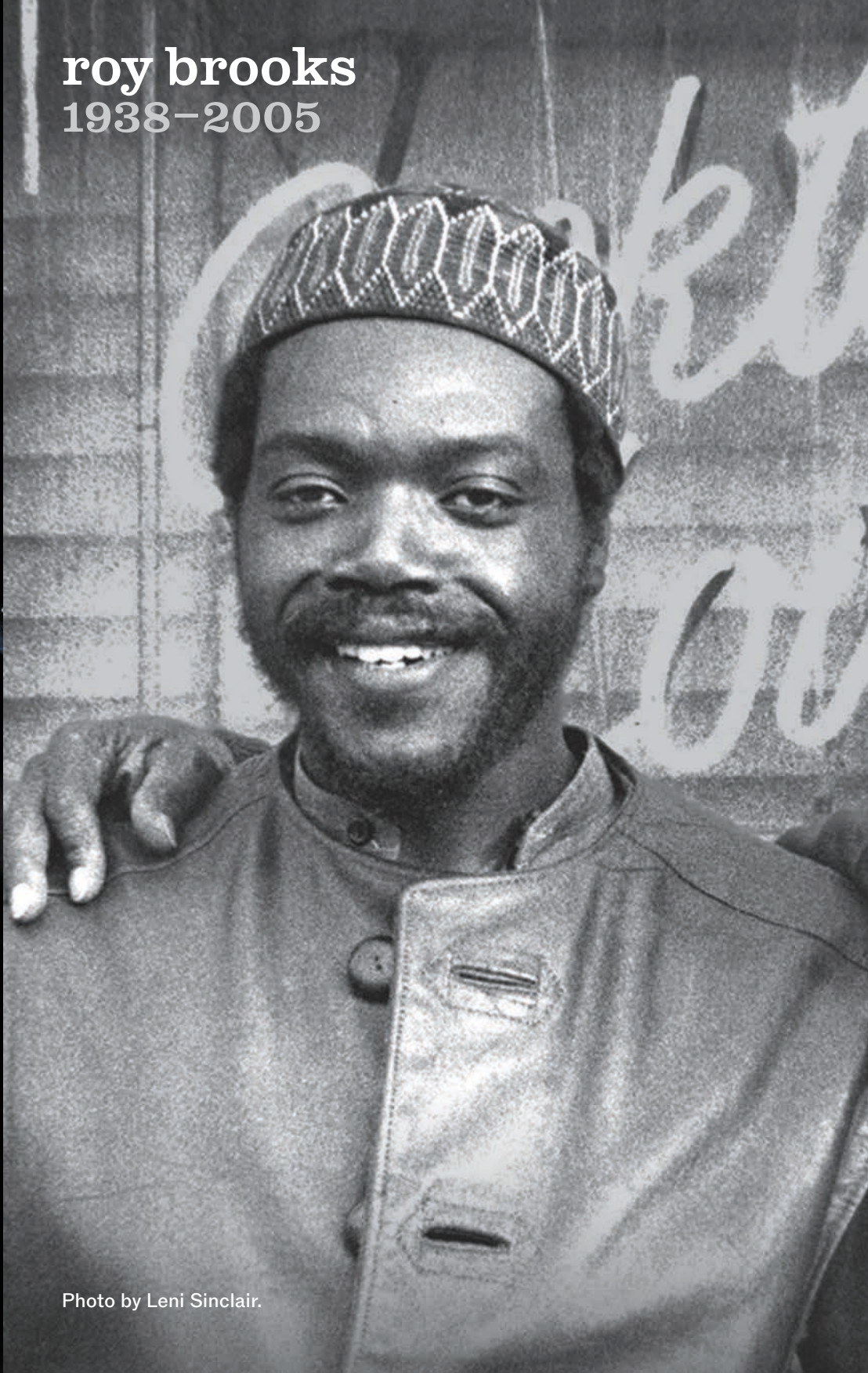
Saxophonist, educator, film composer and record producer. His co-production on Gregory Porter's *Take Me to the Alley* won him a Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal album of 2017.

Kamau is my godbrother. His father, John Alvoy Jones, was my father's best friend and my godfather, so we've known each other from birth. He was the first person I knew to be serious about being a musician. He's really the first person that I actually played jazz with when we were kids, and I mean like, way back when I had my cello. I was probably about 10 or 11, and we were trying to make music together. He was already on a serious path as a musician. He was taking private clarinet lessons. When he finished up, he would walk a couple of blocks over to our house, and we'd have these jam sessions. They were really abstract and funny, but we were making music. He bought a lot of records and we spent time as young folks listening to albums and being dazzled by our musical heroes like McCoy Tyner and Herbie Hancock. Kamau was a true student of the music and helped us have a deeper understanding of what the musicians were playing.

Then, when we got to be teens, and after I got my bass, we did more serious jam sessions at his house. There'd be a drummer, a couple of saxophone players, and a piano player, and we'd just be over there rocking some tunes. That's how we learned how to play. He always knew what he was doing. It took me a while to figure it out.

My first paid, ongoing jam session was with Kamau. He always knew what he was doing. It took me a while to figure it out. Even now, when I need to talk about repertoire and approaches, he really is my go-to person. He's my musical sensei, my shadow producer on all my projects.

roy brooks
1938–2005



Master percussionist, bandleader, and composer. Brooks was noted for his intense, explosive playing, vibrant, colorful performances, and innovative, unorthodox compositions, often featuring instruments of his own devising.

I met Roy in the early 1980s when I became a part of his band, The Artistic Truth. That was one of the early gigs that opened me up as a musician because it required being physically disciplined on the instrument in a way that I hadn't been exposed to. Roy was a very powerful drummer. I'd been in some really great band situations, but Roy's approach to music elevated my playing level. He spent several years in New York and had been on the scene with a lot of legendary players. He'd worked with Thelonius Monk. He'd worked with [Charles] Mingus. He worked with Horace Silver. He had a crazy resume of artists. So, when he moved back to Detroit, he formulated his own groups to see out his musical vision. He formed two groups, Artistic Truth and an ensemble called The Aboriginal Percussion Choir, similar to a group he'd performed in with the great drummer Max Roach. This was a far-reaching group in which he had three drummers; somebody played vibes, and somebody played marimbas. Roy also played steel drums. Then we also had a couple of horns, and I played bass.

Working with Roy gave me my chance to see what it was to anchor a band and not to waver or hold back as a bassist. That was an important, hard-to-get lesson. You can only get it from working with someone who is tremendously powerful. You have to be tested. Working with Roy was my opportunity to test my mettle as a bassist. This was really where I learned how to be a powerhouse on the bass because the task was to cut through an entire percussion ensemble.

Roy also taught me how to be broad and expansive in my ideas of what a musical project could be, and then just go there with it. He had a solo drum piece called The Brown Bomber. He would run this video of Joe Louis, and then he would play drums to this. It was so coordinated; he'd obviously studied this video so that his drumming was coordinated to Joe Louis's punches. He had another project where he'd bring the basketball team from Pershing High School, and they would shoot hoops, and then Roy would drum along with the rhythms. He would actually get up and shoot hoops himself. Like, whoever heard of such a thing? He seemed to know no bounds. Being on the bandstand with Roy gave me the broadest possible idea about the things that could be explored and how much goes into giving a level of gravity to the music's values and lineage. Your choices on the bandstand mean something.

LESSONS IN LINEAGE

ursula walker



Jazz vocalist and lyricist known for interpreting the Great American Songbook and performing with her husband, pianist and arranger Buddy Budson. She is a 2024 Kresge Artist Fellow.

Besides some really, really great training in how to be a good accompanist in a vocal setting, Ursula (and Buddy, her husband) gave me my first glimpse into the possibilities of life beyond music, a critical lesson that I did not always see in the guys who mentored me. I learned how to integrate a life of music into a family life. I could see from the perspective of being a woman and really begin to answer some important questions: What was it like to have a career and still be intentional about the career and about the music?

Ursula has a beautiful voice, and Buddy is an excellent pianist and arranger, the person who's arranged a number of my compositions. Through seeing how they operated – and, in particular, seeing Ursula work as a really top-level vocalist – but still also being somebody's mother and identifying very much with both of those roles, I felt it was possible for me, too. I didn't feel like [raising a family] was an odd thing to do with my life.

A lot of times, you have to see what you're going for in action. Ursula gave me the opportunity to see.

naima shamborguer



Jazz and classically trained vocalist who has recorded with prominent local, national and international jazz artists for over 50 years. She is a 2020 Kresge Artist Fellow.

I started working with Naima in my 20s. What I learned from Naima and continue to learn from her is the importance of taking a lot of agency over your work. She's been very successful in her independence, and she is probably the most recorded vocalist in town in terms of independent music. Naima's [song] book includes music by many of the city's great arrangers: Gene Key, an early arranger for Stevie Wonder, Teddy Harris, musical director for the Supremes and Mary Wilson, and the prolific composer Kenn Cox. With Naima, I had the honor of recording with one of my favorite pianists—the great Larry Willis, formerly of Hugh Masekela, Blood Sweat and Tears and the Fort Apache—a master of piano styles.

The two of us have done a bass and vocal recording, *Pair of Dice*. She's expansive in her approach to the music, and that just helps to expand your world. Even now, Naima is still someone who has a great level of determination to develop her own opportunities. That's a lesson that has been one of the great keys to my career: Have some ideas. Then, make them happen.

teddy harris jr.
1934–2005



Pianist, soprano saxophonist, composer and arranger. Harris studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, was musical director for the Supremes and played Woodstock with Paul Butterfield.

Teddy was my first regular gig in a house band at Dummy George's in Detroit. It was my first opportunity to have to function on the fly as a musician. We would have to play the music of guest artists touring, without them sending us the music ahead of time. I learned a lot about how to swing from playing with Teddy. He always had a very deep connection to pulse and rhythm and how to weave this into any type of music. Arrangers wrote out music by hand during that time and Teddy had the most beautiful music manuscript I'd ever seen—you can always recognize Teddy's pen.

Now, we've got PDFs, links and whatnot. But this was pre-internet. The person would come in on a Wednesday, and we'd rehearse with them and the music sight unseen. I had to be a good reader. Obviously, Teddy trusted that I was reliable as a young person who could read music and that I could interpret and make that artist feel good because, by the end of that rehearsal, we were getting ready to get down on their music in front of people. Working with Teddy and getting that level of experience was an honor. Plus, these were professional opportunities, so it was also a chance for me to get a paycheck as well. This was also when I joined the musicians union—the Detroit Federation of Musicians; I've been a union member for 40 years.

LESSONS IN LINEAGE

donald walden
1938–2008



Saxophonist, composer, bandleader, college professor of music, operator of venue the New World Stage.

The sound of the saxophone that I loved most in life was hearing Donald Walden playing tenor sax. I met Donald playing with Teddy Harris. When Teddy needed a sax player, he would call Donald Walden. Over time, Donald began to call me separately for gigs. I spent many years out on the stand with Donald. He started a group called the Detroit Jazz Orchestra.

He was brilliant. He had a beautiful tone. He was lyrical, deeply engaged in music, and did not suffer fools. He was not going to work with you unless you really had it together. He was totally that guy.

We would play everything from Fats Waller to John Coltrane, any of the great standard repertoire. He was a true student of jazz. He loved the traditions of the music. He was also part of a generation of young folks in Detroit who studied with Barry Harris when he had a cadre of young people with whom he shared information during the late 1950s and he was a highly creative composer.

Donald was also one of the first of my mentors to transition to a university position. He taught at Oberlin College in Ohio, and then he ended up being a full-time tenured faculty member at the University of Michigan in the jazz department.

He also helped me see different directions for the music. One of the most impactful experiences was a project where we performed a live score to an underwater film at the Detroit Science Center that was about the ocean. That was the first time I'd thought about connecting my music and the visuals in an awe-inspiring way. I really loved the combination and thinking about my music in this way, in collaboration with the film.

charlie gabriel



Clarinetist, saxophonist, flutist and fourth-generation jazz musician who was born in New Orleans but moved to Detroit as a teen with his family. He later joined the famed Preservation Hall Jazz Band and returned to New Orleans.

Charlie is the person who introduced me to New Orleans music, and that's super important because that music has a particular sound. There aren't many people who truly know New Orleans' traditional music. Charlie and the Gabriel family—Marjorie Gabriel and Damien Gabriel—is Detroit's connection to New Orleans music. Charlie's sound on the tenor sax is rich and vibrant. It's the perfect blend of bebop and traditional New Orleans music, with a conversational and highly emotional approach. His tone on clarinet—so woody and warm—changed my whole perspective on the instrument. It has been an honor to learn from Charlie and to work with him in New Orleans while on tour with the great ragtime pianist Taslimah Bey.

This gave me a really important perspective on the roots of jazz. When I do jazz history lectures, I always make sure Charlie is prominently featured. I met him through working with Marcus [Belgrave]. They were close friends and toured together.

He's in his 90s now and still sounds great. He spent most of his adult years here in Detroit.

LESSONS IN LINEAGE

kenn cox
1940–2008



Jazz pianist, composer, arranger, activist, and founder of Strata Records.

I met Kenn when I was working with the Roy Brooks bands. I knew that he was always great on piano, but I had no idea at the time what a fantastic and prolific composer he was. He served as a pianist and arranger for The Artistic Truth. Oftentimes, he'd be the person who would notate Roy's music and do the arrangements for the band.

Kenn was kind of quiet, but he was a conduit for some great blessings for me. I worked on so many incredible projects with him. He did a whole suite on the music of Billy Strayhorn, who was the chief arranger for Duke Ellington. That introduced me to a whole new world of music. We had a regular Tuesday night that we used to do at Baker's Keyboard Lounge.

Kenn was also deeply involved in the business of music. He was one of the creators of the Detroit Jazz Festival during his time working with Detroit Renaissance. He also served as a grants panelist for the Detroit Council of the Arts for many years. When he decided to step down from that, he proposed me as his replacement. Suddenly, I was able to have a chance to read grants applications and push forward projects of people trying to get important creative work done here in Detroit. It was an important opportunity for me to see the inside of how things got done in the arts in Detroit. He and his wife, Barbara, started a group called the Societie of the Culturally Concerned, a group that's still together now and focused on lifting up people in the community with honors and recognition. Kenn also started a record company, Strata Records, that was hugely important here in terms of being a source for independent music. He was just so important in my life and in Detroit. In so many ways, I feel like Kenn is still with me. I'm always introducing people to his music and still learning from many of his lessons.

Before he died, Kenn was a visiting professor at the University of Michigan—Dearborn, teaching a course in African American music history. When he passed, I was asked to take his place. That was my first opportunity to teach a music history class at the university level. I was able to get his syllabus from when he taught the class, which gave me wonderful insights into how he saw the music. He actually taught music history retrograde. A lot of people teach, starting with the most ancient. He started with the most recent things in African American music, hip hop, and then the class looks back to where each of the musical trends evolved from, ending in Africa.

I decided to teach that way myself. Kenn understood how wonderful that is for students. It reminds them that this music has deep roots.

tips beyond
the bandstand



As a professor of jazz at the University of Michigan and Oakland University, and as a sought-after guest lecturer at various other colleges and music programs, Marion Hayden's expertise on the bass is powered by a lifetime of high-energy and high-profile experiences.

She has toured the world, making a life in music for herself and gathering countless lessons about creative resilience and survival along the way, which she says are just as vital as mastering the instrument.

Here are Marion Hayden's top eight tips for students and young aspiring professional musicians looking to make their mark on the bandstand and beyond:

1. Be a people person. Be friendly. Connections and contacts are what make things happen in this industry. They also expand your world.
2. Unless you are traveling, answer a text within an hour or two, even if it's a space holder [response] like, "I have to double-check that date." Always show gratitude for the call. A "thanks" is cool.
3. Strive to be as timely as possible in returning texts, emails, and calls. Managing multiple performances and traveling can make this very challenging, but any acknowledgment is appreciated by the sender. Bandleaders, a reminder text, sent the day before or early on the day of a performance, is generally appreciated by busy artists. This also gives you a chance to replace personnel in the event of a scheduling snafu.

Everyone wants to get business done in a timely fashion. Don't judge a book by its cover. Don't assume that someone who is substantially older than you won't be a source of information that's timely, timeless, or highly relevant. You may learn a good deal from them — it's a smart move to listen.

LESSONS IN LINEAGE

4. Don't judge a gig by its paycheck. Judge it by the experience you will have playing the music and the personnel you will work with.
5. Learn some standards. Standards are still a universal language for folks in jazz all over the world. If you are invited to sit in as a guest, no one will play your original music. They will play something everyone knows. Please learn how to play the blues and rhythm changes.
6. The rehearsal is more important than the gig. This is a quote from Marcus Belgrave on the importance of preparation. The rehearsal is where the discussion and fine-tuning of the music happen—not at the performance. Prepare for the rehearsal like it was the gig. This way, you can ask specific questions about the music. Your band leader or conductor will definitely notice and appreciate you for this. Good preparation is also a confidence builder and is one of the ways to combat stage nerves.
7. Know yourself. Know the amount of time that YOU need for mastery of the material. This may be different from what your friend needs. The only important thing is getting the music right. It doesn't matter if one musician requires a few days and you require a few weeks. DO NOT COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS.
8. Be nice to the folks at the front desk, the custodial staff, secretaries/admin assistants, security personnel, wait staff, housekeeping (don't trash hotel rooms!), valets, and bellcaps. Try to keep some cash to tip when appropriate. These are the folks who can really help you in a pinch.



lillian waller

To watch Marion Hayden and her bass at work is to catch a glimpse of musical mastery. To listen to the students Hayden has guided and mentored over the years is to understand just how much of an equal art form she's made of ensuring that Detroit's jazz lineage lives on.

Just as jazz icons Marcus Belgrave, Roy Brooks and others mentored a young Hayden, she has proudly picked up the torch, mentoring young musicians — often students, many of whom go on to become her colleagues, bandmates, and musical co-conspirators, including her son, jazz drummer Tariq Gardner.

“The care that she takes to give back to the next generation the way that she was given to is real,” said Gardner, who regularly performs with Hayden. “As a musician, not just as her son, it's inspiring to see that diligence she has in doing it the right way pay off. That's a real legacy.”

Jazz trumpeter Ingrid Racine met Hayden for the first time while the young musician was a senior at Community High School in Ann Arbor. At the time, Racine was sitting in with a small jazz ensemble at a Washtenaw Community College music festival. Hayden was a member of the jury.

“I remember her saying, ‘Do you listen to Lee Morgan? Because I can hear how you're playing these lines.’ ”

Racine still recalls the moment's impact. “I felt so seen because I love Lee Morgan,” she said. “Somebody, I thought, somebody sees me.”

Later, Racine attended the University of Michigan (U-M). She enrolled in several combo classes with Hayden—the highlight of which was the elder's deep knowledge of and connection to Detroit's jazz community and traditions. She calls Hayden's teaching style equal parts music education and cultural history. Racine loved hearing Hayden's stories about the city's music scene and jazz heritage.



The late jazz icon, drummer Max Roach with Marion's younger son, Tariq Gardner, now a jazz drummer himself.

“She has so many relationships with educators, too,” Racine said, recalling that Hayden partnered with Yolanda Herbert, the principal at that time of Edward “Duke” Ellington Conservatory of Music and Art in Detroit, to bring U-M music students to the city as mentors to high school music students.

Racine is now the fifth member of Straight Ahead, the groundbreaking all-woman jazz ensemble cofounded by Hayden. When the trumpeter thought seriously about giving up music as a profession, Marion “appeared” and offered her a gig in Australia. “Marion is just so great about bringing along younger musicians,” says Racine. “I was thinking to myself that this feels really hard, and then all of a sudden, I get a call from Marion offering me a gig. She has a way of lifting up everybody around her.”

Racine credits Hayden’s impact for igniting her own interest in mentorship. She now sees herself as an heir to Hayden’s insistence that women not only have a presence in jazz but also feel a sense of belonging. “When I see a young woman who’s playing, I go to them,” Racine says, “and give them a little extra attention and make them feel like they are included and that they belong in music. Marion definitely did that for me, and I know that she’s done that for a lot of young women musicians coming up.”



Hayden with students from Oakland University and Professor Mark Stone in 2024. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Follow the Leader

On the bandstand, Hayden's lessons loom large, too.

“Rhythm comes first. It is the number one most important thing when Marion is playing. And I think that probably has a lot to do with why she’s had the long and successful career that she’s had,” says acclaimed jazz, classical, and experimental pianist and composer Michael Malis. “When you take care of the rhythm, you take care of the people you’re performing with.”

Malis met Marion as a freshman at U-M. She instructed his combo class—an experience he enjoyed so much that he and drummer Jesse Kramer signed up for a year-long independent study: Malis on piano, Kramer on drums, and Hayden on acoustic bass. “She has this aspect about her—as a person, as a player, and as a musician—that’s just a joy to be around.”

Malis describes the experience as a formative moment in his musical development, his first encounter with and understanding of the importance of mentors and defining teachers.

Immediately after college, Malis began playing professionally with Hayden and one of her most pivotal mentors, legendary trumpeter and jazz educator Marcus Belgrave.

That is how Malis discovered another of Hayden’s talents: bringing people together. “One of her great talents is putting like-minded people or even people who might be intellectually, spiritually, or emotionally allied, in the same space and allowing conversation, interaction or collaboration to happen, even facilitating that,” Malis explains. “I was maybe 18, 19 at the time. But I could see that even at a really young age.”

Malis credits Hayden’s warmth and generosity for solidifying their bond. “She’s an old-school organizer. We play in a lot of people’s bands together; she plays in my band. But no matter what the project is and no matter what our premise is for getting together,” he says, laughing, “we always seem to end up in her living room.”

Carrying a Legacy

Pianist, composer and producer Ian “Fink” Finkelstein also met Hayden as a student at U-M. “Marion is a very important elder,” says Fink, who is also a 2024 Kresge Artist Fellow. He calls it “an honor” to have her in Detroit.

He felt encouraged by her teaching style and couldn’t get enough of the array of music she brought to class for his ensemble to perform, including music by Marcus Belgrave, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard and Wayne Shorter, to name a few.

The other detail Fink remembers is that Marion Hayden, the nurturing teacher and mentor, can also be tough. “She was very forthcoming about how we could be better,” he said.

Her legacy made obeying an honor, a Detroit privilege. “I was raised in the Detroit jazz scene, and I think it is a hallmark of this particular city that older musicians focus on educating younger musicians.”



Marion and friends rehearsing for one of her signature community performances in Detroit.

As with many of Hayden's students, Fink's learning did not end in the classroom. The two performed with the Marcus Belgrave Group at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola inside Jazz at Lincoln Center in 2014, an event that garnered coverage in The New York Times, including praise for Fink and the others in the band. It was Belgrave's last performance in New York City; he died the following year.

By then, Fink and Hayden had formed a new connection as rhythm section players, a seat that gave the student even greater respect for his former teacher. "The rhythm section is the engine of the whole band," Fink explains. "The bass and drums are running, and the piano accompanies them. It's like a three-person dance type of thing. So that's what Marion brings, a solid foundation to every single situation that she's in, and not just literally on the bass but as a person, too."

One of the lessons Fink cherishes most from Hayden is the fact that she chose to be a "heavy-hitter" who was always here, always present, while many of his music professors in college were heavy hitters who flew into Ann Arbor because they were no longer based full-time in metro Detroit. "I feel like she was holding down the Detroit jazz scene as someone who was always there to pass down a lot of crucial knowledge and music," he explained.

"She's such a strong musician and such an important teacher, nurturer, and carrier of the legacy. And she has impressed upon us, the people she mentors, the importance of continuing the legacy."

Lillian Waller is a poet, essayist and arts writer. She is a 2015 Kresge Artist Fellow in poetry. In 2023, she was awarded an Arts Writers Grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

CARRYING IT ON

bill harris

Hear that? That popping. Like it's coming from a far-distance realm or dimension. That pop! Pop! Pop! Hear it now? Pop! Pop!

Buttons!

Let's call them Pride buttons.

Popping from the chests of Detroit bebop OGs. Looking down from where they're hovering in the heavens. Pride at another of their progeny having been recognized as being exceptional at doing what they, in the Detroit Way, schooled her to do.

Marion Hayden is the 2025 Kresge Eminent Artist.

Of course, she is.

Marion is central, dare I say essential, to Detroit's thrumming jazz scene and has been since the changing of the guard from the OG Motor City bebop maestros and flame carriers to their mentees.

Marion was no accident. Her tutors' difficult but not impossible mission was in the centuries-old African methodology of molding and nurturing a musician. The crafting of another in the long line of next-generation musical artists. Yet another committed to carrying on the tradition of artists connected to and concerned with community welfare and servicing its amusement, ceremonial, and celebratory needs.

Marion is all that to a T. She's our metaphorical George Bailey. The humble, selfless center of his community as portrayed by Jimmy Stewart in *It's a Wonderful Life*. Her guardian angels schooled her in ways to be a booster and benefit to her community and to live out her calling of being a jazz bassist. Subtract her from the recent jazz scene, and needless to say, we're left with a different and deeply depleted version of jazz in the marvelous Motor City musical scenario. (No. Don't imagine it. My bad for even bringing it up.)



Marion performs with 2019 Kresge Eminent Artist Gloria House and Michelle Gibbs.

On a personal note: For Carole and me, Marion has been, over the years, our chef de cuisine for sumptuous side-dish servings of jazz for special occasion events for which a broker for a jazz group was needed: Our 50th-anniversary celebration, art exhibit openings, book signings. All that was needed was a phoned-in date and time to Marion. “I’ll take care of it,” she promised. Kept it. No need for names nor negotiations. No haggling. Event begins. Couple of the best available cats show up. On time. Occasion ready. If she is with them, she may jam for a tune or two just to set the tone and point them in the proper direction. They may be students of hers you’ve never seen before, new migrants to the city who’ve heard the word about the local scene, or trusty gentlemen who have been around since before disco— but take care of professional business they do. Job done. No questions asked. Everybody happy. Like very few other things in life, hassle-free.

Another time, Billy Mark, a sound and interdisciplinary artist and Kresge Artist Fellow, had the idea for a collaboration. He could pin audio files to precise physical areas as one can with Google Maps. I had a story set in a specific North End Detroit neighborhood. We could record it and then pin it, so it was accessible on an app to be heard on a smartphone as one walked from location to location mentioned in the script. Marion, Billy wisely suggested, could compose and play the soundtrack. All I needed to do was get her the script. I did.

In time, the app was posted. Earplugs in, I did a test walk. Her music was so evocative of the time and appropriate to the story that I was forced to stop and stand, listening; I was so enrapt by her music. Nary a note would I change. (It can actually be that joyous when you deal with people whose talents you respect and trust.)

Opposite: Marion Hayden with Marcus Belgrave and Charlie Gabriel. Photo courtesy of Marion Hayden.

Right: A promotional image from Marion Hayden and Billy Mark’s collaborative project, Vacant Lots.





Then there is the delight of watching her—I almost said at work—but it never seems to be that. At play. In all the positive over and undertones of the word. Be it a trio, a hard bop group with horns, a full big band assemblage of assorted swingsters, or a choir of mixed bassists plucking. They're relaxed. Into it. Assured because Marion Hayden is in place with her trusty double bass. Keeping the beat. In charge of the changes. Handling the harmonics. Having their backs.

Back to her jazz mentors for our coda.

Prideful but cool with it. Because by their standards, the worthy were rewarded for the skill set they offered the public. Their assumption being if you were qualified, you would, in time, be recognized and remunerated. Not everybody received a six-figure check, a monograph, and a party, but none of those were the reasons the jazz masters patiently and lovingly imparted their knowledge in the first place.

So, you can see them seeing Marion Hayden being living proof of their fundamental proposition of the improbable possibilities when passing cultural knowledge forward. See why it's so easy to imagine the thrill of their having found a student of young Marion's quality, talent, and dedication. Then, these years later to see the input of their labor paid in full by her being recognized by The Kresge Foundation. Your buttons would pop, too.

Bill Harris is an award-winning poet, playwright, published author, college educator, and the 2011 Kresge Eminent Artist.

THE BASS IS WOMAN

melba joyce boyd



Marion Hayden performs with Melba Joyce Boyd during a reading of “The Bass Is Woman” at the 2023 Eminent Artist Award Ceremony in October 2023. Photo by Erin Kirkland for the Kresge Foundation.

Melba Joyce Boyd is an award-winning poet, biographer, and distinguished scholar. She is the 2023 Kresge Eminent Artist. In 2025, she was named Michigan’s third poet laureate.

At a left –
angled tilt,
adjacent to

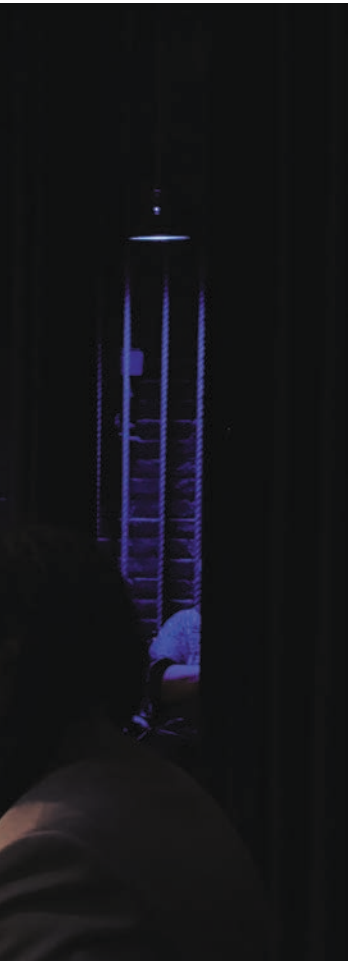
her throat
Marion mind
melds with this
magnificent
instrument.

Lithe, swift
fingers
restringing

eighth notes
in cut time
against
bare-knuckle
restraints
releasing stress
from neck
past breasts
through a
navel leading
into a womb
gifting violet
riffs like sweet
rose water
brimming inside
uninhibited
thick hips
that swing
and sway,
dancing on
ripples of
unreachable
prayers.

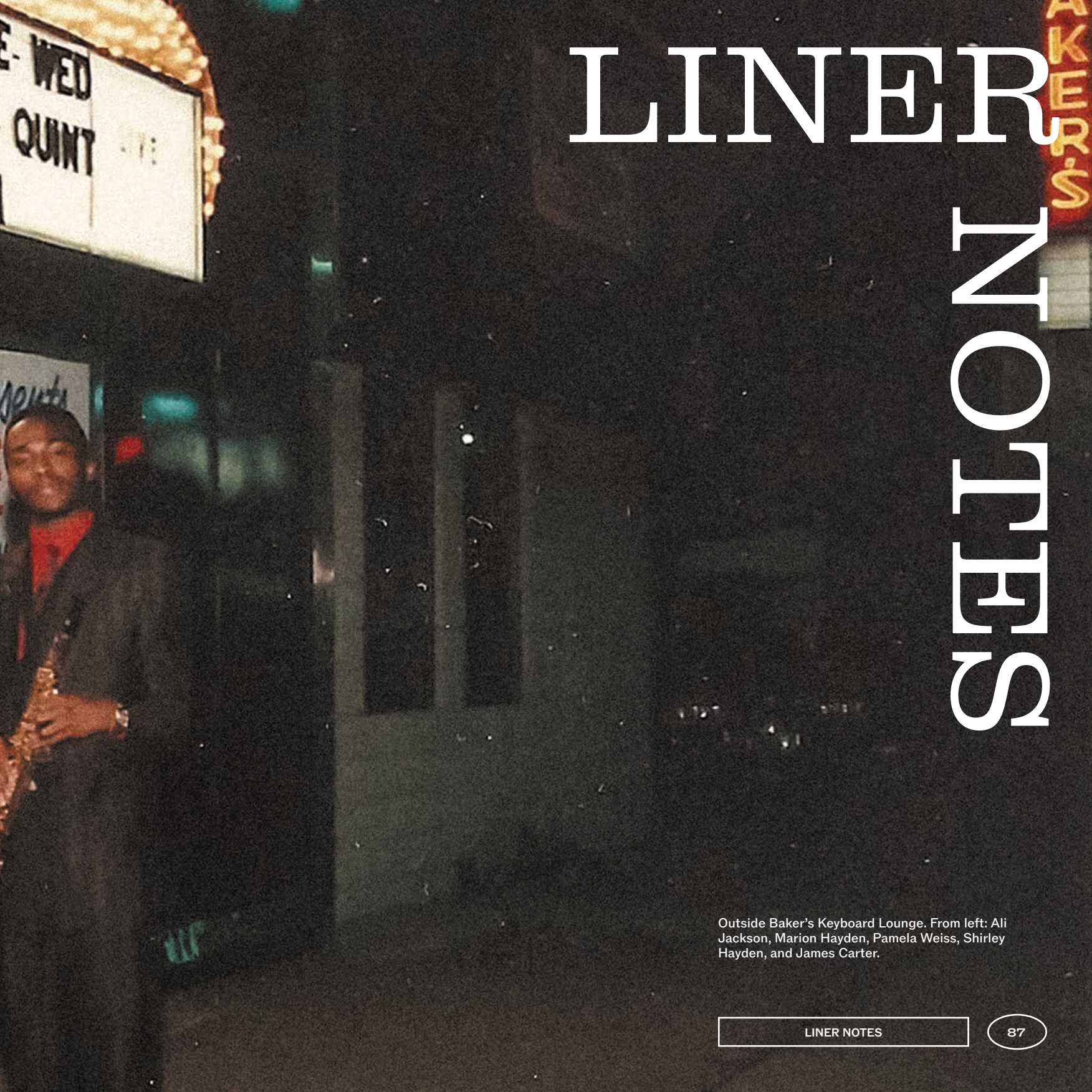
Her brown
curves ground
earth tones
at the base
of rhythm—
the back-
bone of song.

The bass
is woman



"This is not a job. I need to be in the company of other musicians sharing ideas. I like being a practicing, working musician."





LINER NOTES

Outside Baker's Keyboard Lounge. From left: Ali Jackson, Marion Hayden, Pamela Weiss, Shirley Hayden, and James Carter.

A GALAXY OF GIGS



Marion with The Michigan Jazz Masters
circa 1995.

On any bandstand where Marion Hayden is playing, it's said that the rhythm is in perfect hands, being led by a master who is in tune with every beat and enchanted by the live creation and harmonic exchange.

In her nearly five-decade career, Hayden and her bass have performed alongside an array of jazz legends, music icons, writers and other multidisciplinary artists. She has been and remains the first-call accompanist for an all-star roster with no end in sight. Here's a brief look at the list that is still growing.

DWIGHT ADAMS / PEPPER ADAMS / AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE / DEE ALEXANDER /
ERIC ALEXANDER / BRINAE ALEXANDRIA / GERI ALLEN / JOHNNY ALLEN /
PISTOL ALLEN / JOVIA ARMSTRONG / WILL AUSTIN / DAVID BAKER /
A. SPENCER BAREFIELD / FLASH BEAVER / MARCUS BELGRAVE /
NORMA JEAN BELL / GEORGE BENSON / FARUQ Z. BEY / TASLIMAH
BEY / CLAUDE BLACK / WALTER BLANDING / TK BLUE / GEORGE
BOHANON / CHARLES BOLES / LESTER BOWIE / MELBA JOYCE
BOYD / JOANNE BRACKEEN / JOSHUA BREAKSTONE / DEE
DEE BRIDGEWATER / CECIL BRIDGEWATER / ROY BROOKS /
COURTNEY BRYAN / BUDDY BUDSON / CAROL BUFFORD /
KENNY BURRELL / DONALD BYRD / TERRY CALLIER / MILTON
CARDONA / TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON / JAMES CARTER /
REGINA CARTER / SHAREL CASSITY / VINCENT CHANDLER /
ETIENNE CHARLES / CYRUS CHESTNUT / JODIE CHRISTIAN /
JEFFREY CLAYTON / JOHN CLAYTON / GERALD CLEAVER /
CHRISTOPHER COLLINS / CONTI CONDOLI / CARLA COOK /
VICTOR TRENT COOK / KENN COX / CAROLYN CRAWFORD /
MARSHALL CRENSHAW / NEAL CREQUE / THEO CROCKER /
KAMAU DAHOUD / ISIS DAMIL / JAMES DAPOGNE / TANYA
DARBY / ALEXANDRIA DAVIS / XAVIER DAVIS / LESLIE
DESHAZOR / MICHAEL DEESE / ALLEN DENNARD / AKUA
DIXON / RODERICK DIXON / THADDEUS DIXON / SEAN
DOBBINS / DOROTHY DONEGAN / MARCUS ELLIOT /
RON ENGLISH / PEPE ESPINOSA / DUANE EUBANKS /
JON FADDIS / AMP FIDDLER / IAN FINKELSTEIN / SULLIVAN
FORTNER / FRANK FOSTER / CURTIS FULLER / TIA FULLER /
CHARLIE GABRIEL AND THE PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ
BAND / MELISSA GARDINER / DERRICK GARDNER / TARIQ
GARDNER / RANDY GELESPIE / BENNY GOLSON / WYCLIFFE
GORDON / DAVID ALLEN GRIER / JEFF HAAS / KENNETH
“PONCHO” HAGOOD / DOUG HAMMOND / LIONEL HAMPTON /
ROLAND HANNA / FAREED HAQUE / WYNARD HARPER /





BARRY HARRIS / BILL HARRIS / EDDIE HARRIS / DR. TEDDY HARRIS / WENDELL
HARRISON / UMAR BIN HASSAN / LOUIS HAYES / JIMMY HEATH / JON HENDRICKS / JACKIE
HILLSMAN / GLORIA HOUSE / ROGER HUMPHRIES / BOBBY HUTCHERSON / MILLIE
JACKSON / JASON JANAS / INGRID JENSEN / KRIS JOHNSON / HOWARD JOHNSON /
HANK JONES / SEAN JONES / RALPH MILES JONES / URIEL JONES / SHEILA JORDAN
/ K-JOHN / KAMAU KENYATTA / ERNIE KRIVDA / HUGH LAWSON / BILL LEE / KIRK
LIGHTSEY / KEVIN LOCKE / ALEXIS LOMBRE / KEVIN MAHOGANY / MICHAEL MALIS /
RAY MANTILLA / DELFAYO MARSALIS / LLEW MATTHEWS / MICHELLE MAY / DONALD
MAYBERRY / ROBERT MCCARTHER / BOBBY MCFERRIN / HAROLD MCKINNEY / MARIAN
MCPARTLAND / CHARLES MCPHERSON / ALLISON MILLER / MULGREW MILLER /
ANDY MILNE / RON MILNER / NICOLE MITCHELL / ROSCOE MITCHELL / JESSICA
CARE MOORE / FRANK MORGAN / BARBARA MORRISON / JONATHAN MUIR-
COTTON / BERT MYRICK / STEVE NELSON / DAVID NEWMAN / JAMES
NEWTON / SHAHIDA NURULLAH / MILES OKAZAKI / JOHNNY O'NEAL /
DICK OTT / KASSA OVERALL / NICHOLAS PAYTON / JEFF PEDRAS / KEN
PEPLOWSKI / RALPH PETERSON / DAMANI PHILLIPS / BUCKY PIZZARELLI /
GREGORY PORTER / RED PRY SOCK / FLORENCE QUIVAR / INGRID RACINE /
MARTHA REEVES / TOMIKA REID / KAREN MARIE RICHARDSON / CASSIUS
RICHMOND / TIM RIES / KAREEM RIGGINS / DENNIS ROLAND / ANNIE
ROSS / ELLEN ROWE / VANESSA RUBIN / CINDY BLACKMON SANTANA /
JUMA SANTOS / ED SARATH / MARIA SCHNEIDER / JARIBU SHAHID /
NAIMA SHAMBORGUER / MARLENA SHAW / GEORGE SHIRLEY /
JOHN SINCLAIR / LOUIS SMITH / SEQUOIA SNYDER / PETER SOAVE /
ANTHONY STANCO / CHIP STEPHENS / LLOYD STORY / CURTIS
TAYLOR / JUMAANE TAYLOR / SHIRAZETTE TENNIN / CHARLES
TOLLIVER / STEVE TURRE / EARL VANDYKE / ROLAND VASQUEZ /
ALVIN WADDLES / BRANDON WADDLES / DONALD WALDEN /
URSULA WALKER / SALIM WASHINGTON / RODNEY WHITAKER
/ JOSH WHITE JR / BRUCE WILLIAMS / JAMES WILLIAMS / JOE
WILLIAMS / LAWRENCE WILLIAMS / RODERICK WILLIAMS / LARRY
WILLIS / GERALD WILSON / NANCY WILSON / ROBIN WILSON /
SPANKY WILSON / AL YOUNG / THOMAS YOUNG / BRANDEE YOUNGER

VISUAL HISTORY



Above: Marion performing at Hart Plaza in 1987.

Opposite: Marion with Ed Love and Barry Harris at WDET.

Flyers, photographs, and ephemera from a lifetime of Marion's family, friends, and music in and around Detroit.







Opposite: Marion age five. Photos by her father, Herbert Hayden.

Above: Marion, age three, at a roadside attraction in northern Michigan, where her family vacationed in the summers.



Top left: Marion and friends at her 7th birthday tea party.



Bottom left: Marion and friends outside the Winterhalter School.





Top left: Marion ushers into her 6th grade graduation from Birney Elementary.

Upper right: Marion dressed for a dance recital.

Left: Marion, age 9, poses in her Girl Scouts uniform.





From left to right, both pages: Marion's father teaching her mother to swim; Marion's family poses for a picture on the beach during a vacation; Marion's family poses in front of a family cottage at Little Lake Pleasant in Jackson County, MI.

HENRY FORD HIGH SCHOOL

FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT

Detroit, Michigan



*"Music is a powerful esthetic force.
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international and racial bonds."*

Nelson A. Rockefeller



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Lobby and Auditorium

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JOSEPH KERTESZ, Conductor



THE SYMPHONY WIND ENSEMBLE

JACK E. SHELBY, Conductor



SOLOIST:

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Auditorium

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Friday, November 12, 1971



Henry Ford High School music department



SPRING CONCERT



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FRIDAY, MAY 12, 1972

EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

THE DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, INC.

presents the

DETROIT SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA



PAUL FREEMAN, conductor

Sunday, December 3, 1972 • 4:00 p.m. • Ford Auditorium

Assorted ephemera from youth performances.

Above: Marion performs on cello during a 6th grade Detroit Public Schools orchestra recital.





Opposite, upper left: An envelope from correspondence with Marcus Belgrave.

Opposite, bottom left: Marion with Melba Joyce Boyd.

Above: A group photo taken on Belle Isle in Detroit captures a multigenerational gathering of musicians and family members, loosely modeled after Art Kane's iconic 1958 photograph *A Great Day in Harlem*. From left to right, the first group includes Kenn Cox (red), Donald Mayberry (white), Vincent York (stripes), Kamau Kenyatta, Murugi Kenyatta, Michelle McKinney (wrap), Harold McKinney, and James Tatum. Kneeling in the front row are Marion, Asukile Gardner, Michelle Allen, and Pistol Allen. The next row features George Davidson, Barbara Ware, the McKinney twins, Joan Cartwright, and Sandra Bomar. At the railing are Naima Shamborguer, Sheila Jordan, Buddy Budson, Ursula Walker, and Shahida Nurullah. In the back row are Paul Keller, Teddy Harris, Chris Smith, Ron Jackson, Clarence McKinney, Barbara Cox, Hugh Lawson, and George Goldsmith.



JAZZ

REVIEW

by
REVA MITCHELL

Bassist MARION HAYDEN is one of the few women who expertly handles what most people call a 'Masculine instrument.' She is presently demonstrating her talents with the Charles McPherson Quintet at Dummy George. On this dynamic billboard are Detroiters Kenny Cox, Herbie Williams, Charles McPherson, Sr and Jr.

Ms. Hayden's background is interwoven with music and academia. Her first string instrument, at the age of nine, was the cello. Her fourteenth year marked the transition from cello to bass. However education was her immediate horizon. Now, at the age of twenty four, Marion holds a B.S. in Journalism and Biology (from University of Michigan) and an M.S. in Entomology (from Michigan State). In spite of these impressive scholastic attainments her main focus is on music—just for the sake of music.

The following are Marion Hayden's personal statements on Jazz Detroit style.

"I live at home with my parents, but would love to have my own apartment. The music business is so poor, under these circumstances, the possibility of being able to handle my needs and respon-

sibilities are remote. True, I can always take advantage of my other areas of specialty but what I sacrifice in terms of money is gained in terms of practice and study. Relocating to other places that might offer a more lucrative situation, does not necessarily interest me. I am also aware that I will leave Detroit for a period of time to test my abilities as a bassist. It is part of musical education to seek expansion. I want to find out where I stand, I want to know if I can compete on a national and international level with my peers.

Most important, all artists need to find their own niche. I love living with and working for my own people, and Detroit has a substantial number of Black Folk to keep my adrenalin flowing. My private bass instructors, Will Austin and Ray McKinney are examples of Detroiters who devote their time and talent to secure a stable Motor City music environment.

I am committed to remind Detroit's young Black Folk of their rich musical culture. My talent will be used to reinforce the past, present and future of all 'us' super stars."



MARION HAYDEN



THE ROOST
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14132 PURITAN between Ardmore & Cruise, Detroit, Mich.

Phone: 493-9067



THE ROOST LOUNGE—Connie, Sir Fly (prop.)



QUICK HITS

By COURTNEY
CERONSKY

Jazz wonder Hayden premieres a new work at KCH



Homegrown bassist/composer/educator Marion Hayden's performance is described by No Name Jazz News as "melodic and elegant" while the Boston Globe calls her an "immense presence." The New York Times praises, "she regaled the audience with her manner of running the full gamut of her instrumentation."

OK, OK, so Hayden was born and raised in Detroit. Close enough. We're still claiming her as our own. It's not as if her Ann Arbor connections aren't plentiful enough. She attended the University of Michigan as an undergrad, where she's also done some teaching.

In addition, she's chosen to premiere her extended work "Ocean" right here in A-squared at the Kerrytown Concert House on Friday.

"Ocean" is Hayden's "musical illustration" of Phillis Wheatley's dual life as 18th-century poet and slave. Wheatley's profound, sophisticated use of the English



Marion
Hayden

language garnered international attention and praise after the Boston family she was owned by published her works. Award-winning poet, activist and WSU Professor Emerita Gloria House recites Wheatley's poem "Ocean" over the seven sections of Hayden's composition.

Hayden and House are joined by pianist Buddy Budson, trombonist Albert Duncan, trumpeter Dwight Adams and drummer Gera'd Cleaver; as well as vocal-ist Ursula Walker.

Assorted newspaper clippings and ephemera from throughout Marion's career and album releases.

Above: The Detroit Bassmeant Bass Ensemble in 1992. From left to right: Will Austen, Don Mayberry, Dan Kolton, and Marion Hayden.





Opposite: assorted family photos taken in the 1970s.

Above: Marion with her mother, pictured at left as a baby on the beach and at right at a Delta Sigma Theta Founders Day celebration, 1987.





Opposite: Marion's paternal grandmother, Josephine Hayden, and Marion's uncle Clarence Banks.

Above: Marion and her mother on a family trip to Mackinac Island.

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THE CHARLES McPHERSON GROUP

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Gary Schunk, Piano
Marion Hayden, Bass
George Goldsmith, Drums

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Charles McPherson, Sax • Gary Schunk, Piano •
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5 to 6:30 p.m.

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Saturday Sept.1, 1990
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Location; New World Stage.

Sunday Sept.2,1990
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (Entire Company)

Labor Day Monday Sept. 3,1990
9:00 a.m. – 11:00a.m. sound check and block on location; Hart Plaza Amphitheatre.

Performance; 8:00 p.m. arrival Hart Plaza.
Dressage; gentlemen – tuxedos; women – Black white.
Payment by check Sept.4,1990 – 2:00 – 4:00
New World Stage
Please submit names addresses S.S.#
no taxes are with held.

Varios ephemera, adverts, playbills, and schedules from Marion's gigs.

Top right: The exterior of Baker's Keyboard Lounge

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Vincent Bowen — Tenor Sax & Flute

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LOTS OF DANCING AND GOOD FOOD

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HAPPY HOUR
ALL REGULAR DRINKS
\$1.00
ALL LOCAL BEER
\$1.00
11:30 AM-7:00PM



Various ephemera, adverts, playbills, and schedules from Marion's gigs.

Above: Marion with members of the Myron Wahls Trio. From left: Myron "Mike" Wahls; George Davidson; Dorothy Donegan; Marion Hayden.



CHARLES TOLLIVER
LIVE IN BERLIN
At The Quasimodo/ VOL. I

Charles Tolliver

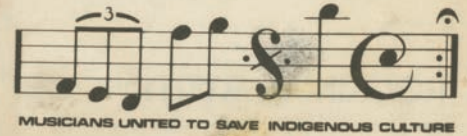
"Tolliver's horn style is possessed of a melodic warmth and compactness of expression shared by few other trumpeters."
Ray Townley
Downbeat

Enjoy holiday fellowships, food, and the best music on the planet with trumpeter Charles Tolliver and pianist Ken Cox featuring bassist Marion Hayden and drummer Danny Spencer at the Club Penta in the Fisher Building • Detroit, Michigan on Sunday, December 23, 1990 • 3:00 pm. - 6:00 pm.
in celebration of Tolliver's new release "Live In Berlin at the Quasimodo/Vol 1" on the Strata East record label.

WJZZ



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WITH



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DONALD WALDEN QUARTET
With Strings

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Randy Gelispie
Marion Hayden

special guests
Marcus Belgrave
Teddy Harris, Jr.



*Performing Originals
and Masterworks of Black Composers*

Friday, February 26, 1982 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.

MARION HAYDEN

select honors, awards & collaborations

education

- 1977 Bachelor of Arts, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor;
Concentrations: Liberal Arts, Music;
- 1982 Masters of Science Studies, Michigan State University, E.
Lansing; Concentration: Urban Entomology (ABD)

awards

- 2024 Detroit ACE Honor—Recognition from the Detroit Arts
Culture and Entrepreneurship program
- 2022 Ron Brooks Award from the Southeast Michigan Jazz
Association
- 2016 Kresge Artist Fellowship—honored as a performer and
educator
- 2016 Jazz Hero Award—a national award given by the Jazz
Journalists Association recognizing people who have made a
significant contribution through their artistry and community
engagement
- 2015 Performing Artist Award—Wayne County Arts History and
Humanities Council
- 2014 Vision and Excellence in the Arts Award—National
Conference of Artists
- 2012 Congressional Resolution, Congressman John Conyers, U.S.
House Article of Recognition, Congressman Hansen Clarke,
U.S. House Testimonial Resolution, Detroit City Council

recent projects

- 2024 **Gateway to Black Eden Project: Procession for Black Eden:** Original work commissioned by New Music USA in response to the sculpture Gateway to Black Eden, a monument to the legacy of Idlewild, Michigan, by M. Saffell Gardner, installed at Michigan Legacy Art Park. Premiered June 2024.
- 2022 **Ancestral Haiku:** A video installation by artist M. Saffell Gardner featuring original music for quartet, dance by award-winning choreographer Robin Wilson, and haiku poetry by Mursalata Muhammed and Marion Hayden. Ancestral Haiku considers spiritual restitution as a way to alleviate spiritual suffering and begin the process of community healing. Draft premiere 2019 at Sidewalk Detroit.
- 2022 **Ocean: The Life and Times of Phillis Wheatley:** A musical suite based on the life of poet Phillis Wheatley. Brought to the US as a 9-year-old, enslaved child from Senegambia in 1761, Phillis Wheatley was revealed to be a prodigy, learning Latin and Greek and becoming the first African American to publish a book in 1773. Originally premiered in 2002, score revision commissioned by Creators of Culture and Kerrytown Concert House.
- 2021 **Blues in the Time of Corona:** An interactive music and art program to aid in community healing through self-expression during the pandemic. Featuring live music performances of original and other works and paintings on a community canvas structured by artist M. Saffell Gardner. Commissioned by ArtOps.
- 2020 **Going My Way:** Musical score for a self-guided walk created by sound designer and Kresge Artist Fellow Billy Mark and Kresge Eminent Artist Bill Harris. Going My Way is the story of two young friends that share a bond, as told through their experiences in the North End section of Detroit.
- 2019 **Highland Park: City of Ogoun:** Original work commissioned by Kresge Arts in Detroit. Highland Park City of Ogoun is a response to the curatorial query: How has change affected your community? This piece includes recorded interviews by current and former Highland Parkers, with music composed around their responses.
- 2019 **Up South—Reflections of the Great Migration:** Sponsored by Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings. Up South is a celebration in music and prose of the great black migration of the early 20th century, as seen through the lens of the Ford family of Detroit, with slide imagery and narration by author Jean Alicia Elster.

ensembles

Straight Ahead. Hayden is a co-founder of the Grammy-nominated touring jazz ensemble Straight Ahead — the first all-woman jazz ensemble signed to Atlantic Records. Original members Hayden, Miche Braden, Alina Morr, Gayelynn McKinney, Regina Carter, and Cynthia Dewberry have represented the Detroit sound—excellence in music, dedication to craft, and authenticity—around the world. Straight Ahead celebrates over 25 years of great music with guest artists such as Karen Briggs, Nicole Mitchell, Tia Fuller, Fareed Haque, Kevin Mahogany, and Umar Bin Hassan. Straight Ahead is in the Detroit Music Awards Hall of Fame and was honored with a 2024 Spirit of Detroit Award, presented by Detroit Councilman Coleman A. Young II.

Detroit Bassmeant Bass Ensemble. Formed in 1988. The Detroit Bassmeant Bass Ensemble consists of 4 to 5 upright basses, a piano, and drums. The group performs repertoire including traditional and avant-garde jazz, original music, and R&B, arranged specifically for this ensemble. Recently performed at the International Society of Bassists Conference, 2023, in Ann Arbor. The ensemble is featured on the recording Best of the Detroit Jazz Festival 2003.

selected large ensemble performances and musical directorships

- 2024 Musical director for re-creation of the historic Be Bop or Be Dead recording by Umar Bin Hassan of the Last Poets. Featuring Straight Ahead and guests. Concert of Colors. Detroit.
- 2023 His Day Is Done. Memorial to Nelson Mandela with words by Maya Angelou. Composed by Ed Sarath. Performed with the Amazonas Symphony. Amazonas Green Jazz. Manaus, Brazil.
- 2023 Don Was presents Detroit Jazz: Curator. Concert of Colors Festival. Detroit.
- 2022 X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X. Opera by Anthony Davis. Detroit Opera House Orchestra.
- 2022 Tribute to Alice Coltrane featuring harpist Brandee Younger. Musical director. Concert of Colors. Detroit.

- 2022 Mingus Mingus Mingus!- A Centennial Celebration. Musical director. Detroit Bassmeant Bass Ensemble. Detroit Institute of Arts.
- 2017 Live silent film scores for The Flying Ace, Rev. S.S. Jones Home Movies and The
2025 Symbol of the Unconquered. Collaboration with pianist Alvin Waddles. Detroit Institute of Arts
- 2009 George Benson: Tribute to Nat King Cole. Tri-C Jazz Orchestra. Cleveland, OH
- 1999 Duke Ellington works: The Sacred Concerts, Harlem Nutcracker and Black Brown
2024 and Beige, conducted by David Berger and Dr. Brandon Waddles. Ellington's Jungle Music, conducted by James Newton. Sophisticated Ladies, conducted by Marcus Belgrave.

selected recent recordings

- 2024 Procession for Black Eden. Marion Hayden Legacy.
- 2024 I See Your Face Before Me. Vocalist Robert McCarther.
- 2022 Naima. Vocalist Naima Shamborgeur.
- 2022 In-ter-gen-er-a-tion-al. Musique Noire.
- 2021 Journey with Me. Violist Leslie DeShazor.
- 2019 Momentum: Portraits of Women in Motion. Pianist Ellen Row.
- 2018 McKinFolk, The New Beginning. Gayelynn McKinney.
- 2018 A Bright and Shining Moment. Ernie Krivda and Swing City.
- 2017 Reflections We Breathe. Musique Noire.
- 2015 Detroit Jazz City. Blue Note Records. Produced by Don Was.
- 2009 Marcus, Charlie & Joan....Once Again. Marcus Belgrave.

advisory panel, 2024–25

Marion Hayden was named the 2025 Kresge Eminent Artist by a distinguished peer group of metro Detroit artists and arts professionals convened by Kresge Arts in Detroit:

Vincent Chandler

Assistant professor of jazz studies, Wayne State University; jazz trombonist; composer; band leader; 2020 Kresge Artist Fellow

Sharon Dow

Commissioner, Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission; Honor Board, Detroit Institute of Arts' Friends of Asian Arts and Cultures; organizer, Asian Night

Marion (Mame) Jackson

Educator, curator, emerita faculty, Wayne State University and University of Michigan

Ryan Myers-Johnson

Executive director, Sidewalk Detroit; board member, Detroit Parks Coalition; board member, Detroit Puppet Company; movement artist

Dave Serio

Storyteller, producer, curator of education and the Arab Film Festival at the Arab American National Museum

the eminent artist award

The Kresge Eminent Artist Award celebrates artistic innovation and rewards integrity and depth of vision with an unrestricted cash prize of \$100,000. The award is presented annually to an artist who has resided and worked in Wayne, Oakland, or Macomb counties for a substantial number of years. Along with the Kresge Artist Fellowships, and Gilda Awards—administered by the Kresge Arts in Detroit office of the College for Creative Studies—the Eminent Artist award reflects The Kresge Foundation's belief that support for artists themselves is integral to a robust arts and culture ecosystem across metropolitan Detroit. Since 2008, Kresge Arts in Detroit has awarded over \$9 million through 17 Kresge Eminent Artist Awards, 317 Kresge Artist Fellowships, and 72 Gilda Awards.

KRESGE EMINENT ARTISTS

2008-24

2024

Nora Chapa
Mendoza

2023

Melba Joyce
Boyd

2022

Olayami
Dabls

2021

Shirley
Woodson

2020

Marie
Woo

2019

Gloria
House

2018

Wendell
Harrison

2017

Patricia
Terry-Ross

2016

Leni
Sinclair

2015

Ruth Adler
Schnee

2014

Bill
Rauhauser

2013

David
DiChiera

2012

Naomi Long
Madgett

2011

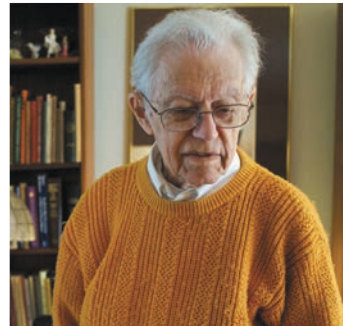
Bill
Harris

2009

Marcus
Belgrave

2008

Charles
McGee



CREDITS and acknowledgments

about the kresge foundation

The Kresge Foundation was founded in 1924 to promote human progress. Today, Kresge fulfills that mission by building and strengthening pathways to equity and opportunity for low-income people in America's cities, seeking to dismantle structural and systemic barriers to equality and justice. Using a full array of grants, loans and other investment tools, Kresge invests more than \$160 million annually to foster economic and social change.

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A

Abler, Paul, 42–43, 43
 Allen, Geri, 20, 22, 25
 Allen, Michelle, 103
 Allen, Pistol, 103
 Armstrong, Ralphe, 40
 The Artistic Truth, 57, 69
 Austin, Will, 40

B

Baker's Keyboard Lounge, 29, 45, 69, 86–87, 110
 bandleaders
 Hayden as, and style, 42, 51, 71, 72, 77, 82, 83, 89, 116
 Hayden work with, 40, 43, 51, 53, 57, 72
 Banks, Clarence, 108
 bass
 Detroit history and players, 38–40, 41
 Hayden composition, 15, 20, 31–32, 105, 115
 Hayden education, 27, 28
 Hayden identity, 13, 32–33, 40, 42, 43, 44, 79, 85
 Hayden performance and accolades, 13, 16, 24–25, 29–31, 33–34, 40, 42–43, 43, 57, 63, 77, 79, 83, 89–91, 104–105, 116
 “The Bass Is Woman” (poem; Boyd), 84, 85
 Belgrave, Marcus, 50, 51
 awards, 7, 9, 18, 121
 Hayden mentorship/relationship, 18, 20, 28, 40, 51, 102
 performances and groups, 51, 79, 83, 102
 Bert's, 29, 30

Blackman, Cindy, 42–43
 Bomar, Sandra, 103
 Booker, Stanley, 29
 Boyd, Melba Joyce, 84, 84–85, 102, 121
 Braden, Miche, 30, 47, 116
 Brooks, Roy, 18, 56, 57, 69
 Brown, Cameron, 40
 Budson, Buddy, 15, 103

C

Carter, James, 42, 86
 Carter, Regina, 30, 44–46, 45, 47, 116
 Carter, Ron, 39, 39, 40, 44
 Cartwright, Joan, 103
 Chambers, Paul, 39, 39
 Chandler, Vincent, 16, 118
 Christian, Nichole M., 13–34, 49
 Cox, Barbara, 103
 Cox, Kenn, 40, 68, 69, 103

D

Davidson, George, 103, 112
 Detroit Bassmeant Bass Ensemble, 105, 116, 117
 Detroit Council of the Arts, 69
 Detroit Federation of Musicians, 63
 Detroit Jazz City (2015), 40–42, 41
 Detroit Jazz Festival, 29, 44, 69, 110
 Detroit Jazz Orchestra, 65
 Detroit, Michigan
 Hayden as artistic and cultural influence, 7, 8–9, 13, 14–17, 18, 33, 40, 44, 45, 49, 69, 74, 78, 80, 82–83, 115
 Hayden family and youth, 23, 23–24, 26, 94, 96–97
 Hayden in jazz scene, 7, 9, 11, 13, 18, 20, 22, 28, 29, 29–33, 36–37, 40–43, 44–45, 46, 49–71, 74, 77,

78–79, 80–83, 86, 88, 89–91,
102–105, 110–113, 114–117
Hayden on, 11, 14, 22, 24, 69
jazz history and figures, 20, 22,
38–40, 45, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61,
63, 65, 67, 69, 74, 79, 80
schools, *21, 28, 76, 96–97, 100–101*
Dewberry, Cynthia, 116
Dobbins, Sean, 42
Donegan, Dorothy, *112*
Dummy George, 29, 63, *111*

F

Farrow, Ernie, 40
Finkelstein, Ian, 78–79

G

Gabriel, Charlie, *14–15, 66, 67, 83*
Gardner, Asukile, 17, *17, 18, 103*
Gardner, M. Saffell, 17, *17, 33, 35, 45, 115*
Gardner, Tariq, 17, *17, 31, 33, 74, 75*
Gibbs, Michelle, *81*
Goldsmith, George, *103*

H

Hammond, Doug, 43
Harris, Barry, 65, 93
Harris, Bill, 80–83, 115, *121*
Harris, Teddy, *103*
Harrison, Wendell, 7, 9, 18, 20, *21, 28, 52, 53, 121*
Harris, Teddy, Jr., 62, 63, 65
Hayden, Herbert Earl (father), 23, 23–
24, 26, 27, 28, 46, 55, 98–99, *106*
Hayden, Herbert, Jr. (brother), 23, 23,
24–25, 98–99, *106*
Hayden, Josephine, *108*
Hayden, Marion

artist statement, 10–11
awards, 7, 8–9, 14–16, 32–34, 80,
83, 114, 116, 118
biography and family, *17, 17–18, 23, 23–28, 26, 31, 33, 45–46, 55, 59, 74, 75, 94–101, 103, 106–107*
career, 9, 11, *12, 13–22, 29–34, 43, 44–45, 46, 59, 61, 69, 71–72, 74–79, 89, 114–117*
as community cultural influence, 7,
8–9, 13, 14–17, 18, 33, 40, 44, 45,
49, 69, 74, 78, 80, 82–83, 115
education, *4–5, 11, 24–25, 25, 27, 28–29, 30, 51, 55, 96–97, 100–101, 114*
on jazz mentors and influences, 11,
20, 22, 27, 28, 49–71
photographs of, *1, 4–5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, 31, 32, 35, 37, 41, 43, 45, 47, 48, 70, 73, 76, 78, 81, 83, 84, 86, 88, 90–91, 92–99, 102–107, 109, 112*
Hayden, Marion (mother), 23, 23–24,
25, 27–28, 29, 46, 98–99, *106–107, 109*
Hayden, Shirley, 86
Henderson, Michael, 40
Herbert, Yolanda, 76
Holley, Major, 40
House, Gloria, *81, 121*
Hurst, Robert, 40

J

Jackson, Ali, 86
Jackson, Ron, *103*
Jamerson, James, 38, 39
jazz
college programs, *12, 19, 20, 22, 65, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79*

Detroit history and figures, 20, 22, 38–40, 45, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 74, 79, 80
 Hayden composition, 15, 20, 30–31, 115
 Hayden in Detroit jazz scene, 7, 9, 11, 13, 18, 20, 22, 28, 29, 29–33, 36–37, 40–43, 44–45, 46, 49–71, 74, 77, 78–79, 80–83, 86, 88, 89–91, 102–105, 110–113, 114–117
 Hayden introduction and learning, 18, 27, 28, 51, 55, 67, 69
 industry awards, 15, 30, 114, 116
 New Orleans history, 67
 women in, 9, 13, 20, 22, 25, 29, 30, 59, 76, 116
 Jellick, Mike, 42
 Jones, Hank, 40
 Jordan, Sheila, 40, 103

K

Keller, Paul, 103
 Kenyatta, Kamau, 54, 55, 103
 Kenyatta, Murugi, 103
 Kolton, Dan, 105
 Kramer, Jesse, 77
 Kresge Artist Fellows, 43, 59, 61, 78, 114, 115, 119
 Kresge Foundation Eminent Artist Award, 7, 9, 14, 15, 119
 Hayden (2025), 7, 8–9, 14–16, 32–34, 80, 83, 118
 previous recipients, 7, 9, 15, 18, 20, 51, 81, 84, 84–85, 120–121

L

Lawson, Hugh, 103
 Love, Ed, 93

M

Malis, Michael, 77
 “Many Blessings,” 42
 Mark, Billy, 82, 115
 Mayberry, Don, 103, 105
 McBee, Cecil, 40
 McGowan, Katie, 8–9
 McKibbon, Al, 40
 McKinney, Carlos, 103
 McKinney, Clarence, 103
 McKinney, Gayelynn, 30, 47, 103, 116
 McKinney, Harold, 18, 28, 103
 McKinney, Michelle, 103
 McPherson, Charles, 40, 110, 111
 Morgan, Lee, 74
 Morr, Alina, 30, 46–47, 116
 “Mr. Kenyatta,” 42
 multidisciplinary projects, 65, 82, 115, 116, 117
 Myers-Johnson, Ryan, 16, 118

N

New Orleans jazz, 67
 Nurullah, Shahida, 103

O

Oakland University, 20, 76
 O’Neal, Johnny, 22
 Owens, Endea, 40

P

Patitucci, John, 44
 performance. See bass; jazz;
 recordings and releases; rehearsals
 Peterson, Ralph, Jr., 42
 professional habits, 13, 16, 29–30, 31, 51, 71–72, 82

Q

QOB Mandala (Gardner), 35

R

Racine, Ingrid, 74, 76

Rapson, Rip, 7, 15

recordings and releases

Detroit jazz, 40–43, 41, 117

Hayden's, 30, 31–32, 41, 42, 53, 61, 117

rehearsals, 45, 51, 63, 72, 110

Roach, Max, 75

Rowe, Ellen, 16

S

Shahid, Jaribu, 40

Shamborguer, Naima, 60, 61, 103

“Sheila’s Blues,” 40, 42

Smith, Chris, 103

Stone, Mark, 76

Straight Ahead, 30, 31, 46, 46–47, 76, 116

Stryker, Mark, 38–43

T

Tatum, James, 103

Taylor, Gene, 40

Tolliver, Charles, 112

U

University of Michigan

Hayden career, 12, 19, 20, 22, 22, 69, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79

Hayden education, 28–29

Hayden mentors, 65, 69

V

Visions (2007), 31, 41, 42, 53

W

Wahls, Myron, 112

Walden, Donald, 64, 65, 113

Walker, Buddy, 59

Walker, Ursula, 58, 59, 103

Waller, Lillien, 74–79

Ware, Barbara, 103

Watkins, Doug, 40

WDET, 53, 93

Weiss, Pamela, 86

Whitaker, Rodney, 15, 29–30, 40

women

award winners, 9, 15, 30

in jazz, 9, 13, 20, 22, 25, 29, 30, 59, 76, 116

Y

York, Vincent, 103

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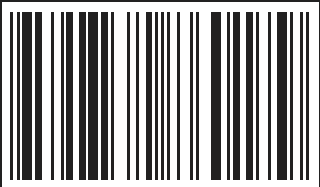
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