

# Cannonball adderley essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The career, creative achievements and artistry of Julian “ Cannonball”

Adderley marked a new outstanding epoch in jazz music, which he and his vivid improvisations opened in the history of jazz. He was among the most significant musicians, alto saxophonists, educators and enthusiasts of jazz and soul-jazz cultures of the twentieth century. He had own unique style of communication with his listeners, own energetic and “ entertaining” sound, as well as own exclusive approach to his playing, composition and the whole concept of understanding of jazz music.

Julian Edwin Adderley was born on September 15, 1928 in a small city Tampa in Hillsborough County, Western Florida. His father was a jazz cornetist and trumpeter, who was the first to discover a huge talent of his son and to develop it by his own means and efforts. A lot of his knowledge and musical secrets were passed to Julian and his younger brother Nat, who also yearned for becoming a musician. It is interesting that in his childhood Julian Edwin received a nick-name “ Cannonball” (which was actually a corruption of “ cannibal”) for his being an immoderate eater. Therefore, a bright musical career of the talented boy was predetermined.

In order to continue his education, Julian was sent to Tallahassee, where he studied for four years to be a musical teacher and leaded an unknown jazz band. In 1948 he entered the path of an educator and started directing a high school band in Dillard High School, located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. His personal traits, such as communicativeness, simplicity, openness and ability to captivate the interest of his students, contributed enormously to his reputation as an effective organizer and leader. After a series of successful performances with the supportive orchestra of the U.

S. 36th Army Dance Group, Adderley became a legend in South Florida. In 1955 Cannonball Adderley moved to New York City intending to continue his education in New York University in Manhattan. But the fortune smiled upon him and changed his plans: one day he was invited to jam with the band of Oscar Pettiford in local Cafe Bohemia. His playing became a real sensation and many were enchanted with Adderley's performance, admitting that his improvisations resembled the style of a contemporary jazz giant, saxophonist and influential composer Charlie "Yardbird" Parker.

That is why after this historical session in Bohemia, Adderley received a new job, a new recording contract, as well as a new nick-name "The New Bird". Nevertheless, Adderley wanted to prove to everyone that the comparison with Parker was quite one-dimensional. He had his own manner of playing and views on jazz music, which were formed under the influence of not only Parker, but also such blues and soul musicians as Benny Carter, and others. That is why in late 1955 together with his brother Nat he formed their own band, a quintet, which was playing so called hard-bop.

Their music was quite different from a very popular musical approach, promoted by Gunther Schuller and called third-stream jazz, which was a certain mixture of jazz and art styles. Moreover, it is necessary to mention that in those times the main leitmotif of Adderley's experimentations with his music was re-establishment of the fundamentals of African-American melodies and harmonies in modern jazz culture, in particular, by using handclap-eliciting rhythmic patterns, call-and-response stylistic sketches or even elements of African vernacular speech and gospels.

He used to speculate about his musical discoveries on the pages of Down Beat Magazine, the monthly Bible of jazz music. Besides, Adderley was always very attentive to the reaction of the audience on his improvisations, because in his opinion the main role of jazz was to communicate with people and be understood well. "...When people tell me they like jazz but they don't understand it, I ask them to tell me what music they do understand, what they understand about it, and why they think that music is easily understood..

[from Jazz in the Curriculum, conversation with Cannonball and Dorothy Ashby about jazz education on school]" (Milton). Unfortunately, this first set of the Cannonball Adderley Quintet failed to achieve some substantial commercial success and fell apart in 1957. But with the invitation to replace Sonny Rollins and join the historical sextet of Miles Davis, another period of active advancement and progress started for Adderley. It was an amazing opportunity to play together with such coryphaei of jazz music as John Coltrane, Jimmy Cobb, Paul Chambers, Red Garland, Bill Evans and Miles Davis himself.

For two years they recorded several albums: Milestones in 1958 and Kind of Blue in 1959 in Columbia Records, and a concert album Miles and Monk at Newport (released later on in 1963). Miles was admiring Adderley's competence and creative impulses considering him to be one of the best alto saxophonists he had ever worked with. "...He had a certain spirit. You couldn't put your finger on it, but it was there in his playing every night," (Feather & Hitler 7). Undoubtedly, Adderley was heavily influenced by Davis,

and this influence reflected on his playing, which was becoming more direct, well-balanced and powerful.

In 1959 Adderley left Davis's band and initiated the reunion of the Cannonball Adderley Quintet, featuring his brother and a set of other great jazz musicians. This time the band was more promising, and with its first live recording at San Francisco's Jazz Workshop in the end of 1959 the quintet attracted attention of general public. The other instant hit was a composition of Bobby Timmons This Here, a nice piece of soul-jazz. It marked the period when Adderley got the opportunity to develop his talent in a stable musical environment and release his potential as a brilliant alto and soprano saxophonist, soloist and composer.

The Quintet was successfully performing for about 16 years. In 1962 the band was extended to a sextet after the inclusion of Yuseef Latif (a tenor sax, who was later on replaced by Charles Lloyd) and collaborated with Joe Zawinul (piano). In different sessions the following musicians shared the stage and studios with Adderley: bass players Walter Booker, Sam Jones and Victor Gaskin, drummers Roy McCardey and Louis Hayes, pianists Victor Feldman, George Duke, Hal Galper and Joe Zawinul.

At that, the Adderley brothers always were the heart of the band, contributing with their passion, true love to music, innovative approaches and divine musical intuition. In 1966 the band (again as the Quintet) released famous Mercy, Mercy, Mercy of Joe Zawinul, an extraordinary pianist-virtuoso of Austrian origin, who attempted to enrich the music of the

quintet with certain elements of different modern styles, such as funk, pop and electronic.

This song became a landmark in the history of the quintet, because it expanded the audience of the band and substantially increased the number of its fans. Other hits included Walk Tall by Zawinul, Work Song, Fun and The Jive Samba by Nat Adderley, etc. In the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s Adderley went on performing and releasing albums. His latest compositions can be considered the examples of avant-garde style and electric jazz, employing such techniques as saxophone doubling, long melodic phrasing and pulsing rhythmic patterns.

This everything made Adderley's music more commercial and popular. Till the end of his life he remained a public promoter of jazz culture. He continued writing for Down Beat magazine and participating in numerous TV shows, entertaining his audience with interesting comments and captivating reviews of current events and new jazz releases. He was discovering and supporting young talented musicians. He died on August 8, 1975 after having a sudden stroke.

Undoubtedly, the matchless remarkable career of Julian Cannonball Adderley and his quite large musical legacy had a considerable impact on further development of the whole jazz culture in America. That is why his name is honored with a small museum in University in Tallahassee and an honorable scholarship in the University of California, LA. It is obvious that new generations will still admire the music of this unique American performer and

educator, one of those few influential personalities who changed public perception of jazz and boosted its popularity.