

SOUNDS OF THE CITY MUSICIANS & RHYTHMS OF WASHINGTON DC 2023



CHUCK BROWN

Music legend and the undisputed creator of the go-go beat, Chuck Brown is the foundation of DC's popular music style. "The Godfather of Go-go," created the distinct musical sound in the early 70s, drawing on his love of blues, jazz, soul, Latin and African rhythms. Brown's live concerts were legendary and more than three decades later, still echo in the neighborhoods of Washington, DC. Go-go was declared the official music of the District of Columbia in 2020. Chuck Brown died in 2012. Chuck Brown Memorial Park opened in August of 2014. His likeness can be found on the side of the famous Ben's Chili Bowl restaurant on U Street and in neighborhoods throughout the city.



SHIRLEY HORN

With her distinctive voice and signature slow pace, jazz singer and pianist Shirley Horn was one of the leading jazz musicians of her generation. Horn's remarkable talent was evident at a young age. She began piano at age 4 and by age 20, was playing in many of the clubs in the U Street jazz corridor as the leader of her own jazz trio. In 1960, Horn's first album "Embers and Ashes," caught the attention of trumpeter Miles Davis who demanded she open for his performance at the Village Vanguard in New York. Horn won a Grammy in 1999 for Best Jazz Vocal Performance. She was honored in 2004 by the Kennedy Center and named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master. Horn died in 2005. You can find her featured in a mural on 6th and T Streets next to the Howard Theater.



MARVIN GAYE

A true son of Washington, DC, Marvin Gaye's voice was a rare musical instrument that ranged from pleading falsetto to romantic tenor and soulful gospel. Recording such hits as "I Heard it Through the Grapevine," "What's Going On," and "Mercy Mercy Me," Marvin Gaye was one of Motown's biggest stars. The three-time Grammy winner took home the award for Best Male R&B Vocal Performance in 1983. Gaye died in 1984, was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987, and sits at number six on Rolling Stone Magazine's list of "100 Greatest Singers of All Time." You can find a mural tribute to Marvin Gaye at 7th and S Streets in Washington, DC.



LILLIAN EVANTI

Opera singer Lillian Evanti was the first African American to perform with a major European opera company. The accomplished lyric soprano gained national attention in 1917 when she sang French, German, English and American songs at her Howard University commencement. In 1924, she set sail for Europe where she studied and performed in professional opera companies in Italy, Germany, Austria, England, and France. At the height of her career Evanti returned to the United States where she continued to sing to praise and acclaim. Evanti's legacies include founding the National Negro Opera Company and advocating for the establishment of the Kennedy Center. Evanti died in 1967. A painted portrait of her can be found in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC.



DUKE ELLINGTON

Pianist Edward Kennedy Ellington was an originator of the "Big Band" and "Swing" sounds, a jazz giant, and one of America's most prolific composers. Ellington earned the nickname "Duke" because of his cool manner and dapper dress. His professional career spanned more than 50 years. During the Harlem Renaissance (1920s -1930s), Duke Ellington and his band, "The Washingtonians," were based in New York City, where he rose to international fame. Though best known for jazz standards like "Take The A Train," "It Don't Mean a Thing if it Ain't Got That Swing," and "Satin Doll," Ellington composed more than one thousand pieces. Duke Ellington died in 1974. DC's Duke Ellington School for the Arts is named after the legendary musician, and a mural with his likeness overlooks 12th and U Streets.



JANUARY

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DECEMBER

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