

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with T.S. Monk, III

PERSON

Monk, T. S. (Thelonious Sphere)

Alternative Names: T.S. Monk, III;

Life Dates: December 27, 1949-

Place of Birth: New York, New York, USA

Residence: Vineyard Haven, MA

Occupations: Jazz Musician

Biographical Note

Jazz musician Thelonious Sphere "T.S." Monk, III was born on December 27, 1949 in New York City, New York. His father, Thelonious Monk, was a famous jazz pianist and composer. Monk played trumpet and piano before switching to drums at the age of fifteen, taking lessons from percussionist Max Roach.

Monk's first public performance as a drummer was with his father on a television show in 1970. He toured with his father's band from 1970 to 1975, and then played with the fusion band Natural Essence. He later formed the R&B group "T.S. Monk" with his sister Barbara Monk and vocalist Yvonne Fletcher. The group recorded three albums for Mirage Records in the early 1980s and charted a top 20 hit with its single "Bon Bon Vie (Gimme the Good Life)," followed by "Too Much Too Soon."

In 1986, Monk co-founded and chaired the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz in memory of his father, who passed away in 1982. Monk returned to performing jazz in 1992, after an absence of several years, forming the T.S. Monk Sextet. That same year, he released *Take One* on Blue Note Records, which was followed by *Changing of the Guard* in 1993 and the critically acclaimed *The Charm* in 1995. He celebrated his father's eightieth birthday with the album *Monk on Monk* in 1997. He then released three more records: *Crosstalk* in 1999, *Higher Ground* in 2003, and 2014's *Verbiest Meets Monk: Father and Son*, a collaboration with Belgian jazz accordionist, Rony Verbiest. Monk's sextet has performed at the White House, various festivals and concert halls, legendary jazz clubs and landmark institutions in the United States, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Monk received the New York Jazz Awards First Annual "Recording of the Year" award and *Downbeat* magazine's prestigious 63rd annual Album of the Year Reader's Choice

Award for Monk on Monk. In addition, his Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz sponsored ABC's "A Celebration Of America's Music" in 1996 and 1998, held its International Jazz Competition since 1987, and offered its full scholarship Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance graduate-level college program since 1995. Monk also collaborated with Herbie Hancock and UNESCO in 2012 in creating "International Jazz Day," a gathering of jazz musicians from 196 countries.

T.S. Monk was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on September 9, 2014.

Related Entries

Natural Essence [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

"T.S. Monk" - Mirage Records [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Thelonious Monk's Band [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1970 to 1975]

Drummer

Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1986 to ?]

"T.S. Monk Sextet" [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1992 to ?]

"International Jazz Day" [MEMBEROf]
[from 2012 to ?]

Organizer