

Meyer, Aravid Clement born June 20 1927 in Copenhagen, Denmark, died August 29 2007 in Næstved, Denmark.

Trumpet player, bandleader, music teacher, lecturer, jazz writer, administrator and head of The Danish Jazz Center.

Parents: member of the Danish Parliament A. C. Meyer and nurse Olga Meyer. Sibling: Thorbjørn Meyer.

Married to Karen Meyer. July 2002 the couple celebrated their golden wedding. Children: Asbjørn Cim Meyer, born December 28 1954 and Anne Camilla Meyer born March 22 1971.

Aravid Meyer took an interest in jazz at the tender age of 12. Studied trumpet playing during World War Two, among others with Erik Parker from Leo Mathisen's Band and Kurt Pedersen from the Royal Orchestra and the Royal Danish academy of music. Otherwise Aravid was predominantly self-taught.

He played with various amateur swing bands 1943-46 and was involved in the revival movement in the 50s. Member of Torben Ulrich's orchestras 1951-57: his Blue Note Jazz Band 1952-55 and his pianoless quartet Mulligan-Dixieland 1955-56. Also with Poul Eriksen's Sextet, including Klaus Albrechtsen on clarinet, the other house band in the Danish Blue Note club. Briefly, 1956-57, Aravid was part of a sextet lead by Torben Ulrich and Henrik Johansen and from then on with Johansen 1957-59. On tours Aravid accompanied Albert Nicholas and Sister Rosette Tharpe a.o. Style is now more like swing.

Throughout 14 years, 1959-73, Aravid was trumpet player as well as arranger and manager for his own sextet: Aravid Meyer's Orchestra – reckoned as one of the most important Nordic ensembles playing swing music. The orchestra also received great attention 1960-61 as The Kino Dixielanders with carefully rehearsed accompaniment to old Chaplin silent movies.

With short tunes that alternated between arranged and improvised parts the orchestra aimed at a varied course of events. The main ideas were a singing ensemble playing and a combined wind section that phrased with weight, strongly laid-back, and a rhythm group, that gave a forceful drive ahead without getting too far away from the horns.

The orchestra toured all over Denmark and had numerous gigs in radio, television, film, and festivals, contributing to the growing interest in the genre swing and gradually newer forms of jazz. Throughout the years the line-up included Aravid (tp), Torolf Mølgård / John Darville (tb), Leif Juul Jørgensen (cl), Jesper Thilo / Ole Kongsted / Hal Singer / Niels Harrit (ts), Jørn "Jønne" Jensen / Torben Hertz / Niels Jørgen Steen (p, arr), Ole Christiansen / Henrik Hartmann / Hugo Rasmussen (b), and Hans Nymand (d).

The orchestra was in particular known for its ensemble playing with a long line of American soloists, most of them brought to Denmark by Arnvid: Cat Anderson, Don Byas, Benny Carter, Bill Coleman, Buck Clayton, Vic Dickenson, Harry Edison, Roy Eldridge, Edmond Hall, Coleman Hawkins, Jay C. Higginbotham, Joe Newman, Charlie Shavers, Hal Singer, Stuff Smith, Rex Stewart, Ben Webster, Mary Lou Williams a.o.

Arnvid Meyer's Orchestra worked for a long lasting and often repeated cooperation with its soloists. Among the results were TV and Radio broadcasts as well as record releases: 1962, Sonet EP with Higginbotham – 1965, two LPs with Webster on Polydor / Black Lion, reviewed as among the best of Webster's late recordings, (five stars in Down Beat), released on CD as THE JEEP IS JUMPING.

I Jazz Journal International (October 1994) Al Merritt writes about this CD: "... he is nobly supported by a band that might from its sound have been drawn from a latterday Ellington Orchestra. In particular the trumpeter Arved Meyer and the trombonist John Darville have that strong Ellingtonia sound that could easily have fooled an expert on a blindfold test."

Arnvid was referred to as "Exceptionally vigorous. A very personal jazzman. Stylistically he cannot be assigned to a single American musician" (Jørgen F. Nissen, Ekstra Bladet, February 24 1965). "Plays candidly and fresh and without clichés." (Anders R. Öhman, Orkester Journalen November 1968). On *Stompy Jones* Arnvid Meyer too played a solo that stood out better than anything from the previous years with guest performers: open horn, sharp edges as well as growl like Eldridge, and divisions with and against the beat. For the orchestra and Meyer the evening was a triumph..." (Torben Ulrich, BT 1965)

Arnvid Meyer stopped his career as trumpet player in 1973 due to a huge workload organizing the jazz field in Denmark.

He is active from the 1960s onwards as lecturer, educator, and leader of courses, rallies and conventions. Numerous jazz-competitions have Arnvid Meyer as judge. He is also producer in the Danish Radio Corporation.

Arnvid Meyer wrote a substantial amount of articles and reviews to periodicals and newspapers. He was a regular reporter for the newspaper *Aktuelt* 1965-70 with weekly jazz columns, which probably offered the widest scope of jazz news in the country. Similarly affiliated the newspaper *Ekstra Bladet* 1970-75. Arnvid wrote numerous descriptions of musicians and bands, press releases, leaflets, lists etc. He took the initiative to several paperbacks like the *International Directory of Jazz Festivals* (fourth edition 1996, 110 pp).

As early as 1952-57 Arnvid Meyer were among the leading figures for one of the first and biggest postwar jazz clubs, Blue Note. Arnvid did the programming and was artistic director for the first Montmartre 1971-74 and the new Montmartre 1976-77, for The Copenhagen

Jazzmobile 1972-91 a.o. He was member of the artistic board of the Copenhagen Jazz Festival 1979-81 and facilitated many jazz clubs, festivals and other jazz activities.

Arnvid Meyer was a pioneer as far as organizing the jazz area. He was co-founder of associations of Jazz Musicians (1967), Danish Big Bands (1979), Jazz Musicians' Promotion of Orchestras (1969), The Danish Jazz Center (1971), Rhythmic Music Promotion (1977), Jazz Contact (1982), The Association of Danish Jazz Clubs (1972), The Association of Jazz Media Employees (1977), Radio Jazz (1986), Advisory Board for Rhythmic Music Education in Denmark (1980) and many more.

Arnvid was member of The Danish Jazz League 1964-73 and administrator of the same 1973-81. The Danish Jazz League, which was founded by Erik Wiedemann in 1956, organized concert tours, seminars and record productions.

Numerous jazz organizations were assisted from The Danish Jazz Center, lead by Arnvid Meyer 1971-97. When the Danish Music Law (the first of its kind) came into force in 1976 this institution received a yearly grant. During the 1980s, as the number of independent jazz organizations grew, The Jazz Center's commission was reduced to information and documentation.

The self-financed Jazz Contact is still in operation and has worked for the dissemination of live music, lectures, tours and concerts. Among the people who have been presented are Wild Bill Davison, Gil Evans Orchestra, Dizzy Gillespie, Thad Jones – Mel Lewis Big Band, Tania Maria, Jimmy and Doug Raney, Sonny Rollins... Eventually the most important task became the managing of The JAZZPAR Project.

The JAZZPAR Prize – the world's largest jazz award of its kind – had Arnvid Meyer as the prime mover. It was established in 1989 and went on until 2004. The cash prize was about USD 30.000 and the Project, including an international committee, a yearly concert tour, radio and sometimes TV broadcasts as well as record releases, had a total budget each year in the neighborhood of USD 200.000.

Arnvid Meyer has worked for equal rights for jazz and other art forms and been spokesman for the political understanding of the social importance of this art form. He held several positions as president, chairman or member of influential jazz music organizations and received several honorable prizes.

Since the 1940s Arnvid Meyer was a keen collector of jazz phonograms and records, which were continuously categorized. Being among the largest in Northern Europe and best covering

the history and diversity of jazz, this collection will now become the property of the Royal Danish Library.

The last couple of years Arvid Meyer were engaged in the preliminary work of a new Danish jazz discography. With his son he worked on the publication of a book and CDs containing highlights from his band, including the many American soloists. Before his death Arvid achieved a look at the finished result. The material is expected to be released this year.

Arvid Meyer's lifelong commitment to jazz was marked by idealism, open-mindedness and industry. No project was impossible and any obstacle could be overcome.

In 1988 Arvid Meyer was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease – and this incurable disease finally turned out to be the battle, which he could not win.

Cim Meyer
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