



Miles Davis

May 26, 1926 - September 28, 1991

Santa Monica, California

Miles Dewey Davis III - American trumpeter, bandleader, and composer who kept reinventing the sound of jazz until reinvention itself became his signature - died in Santa Monica, California, on September 28, 1991. He was sixty-five. Born May 26, 1926, in Alton, Illinois, and raised in East St. Louis, he grew up hearing his dentist father's polished middle-class expectations collide with the raw nightlife of river-city clubs. A Juilliard scholarship brought him to New York in 1944; within months he was sitting in with Charlie Parker, learning that schoolrooms were only one kind of classroom.

Birth of the Cool sessions at the turn of the 1950s sketched a softer American modernism; Kind of Blue in 1959 opened modal space so wide that rock, soul, and hip-hop still borrow its air. He led quintets that minted careers - Coltrane, Evans, Hancock, Shorter, Williams - then pushed into electric fusion with Bitches Brew when peers called the move betrayal. Davis answered with silence, then with another album. Pain, addiction, and fashion were never separate from the horn; he painted late in life with the same angular insistence he brought to a mute.

Santa Monica Community Hospital closed a circle that began on Midwestern riverbanks. He died after a stroke and respiratory failure, leaving a catalog that refuses to sit still on a shelf.

East St. Louis taught him that polish and grit could share a stage; Manhattan Blue Note booths and Columbia sessions taught the world to listen differently. He wore scarves and attitude as armor, yet the trumpet tone - thin, singing, sometimes almost spoken - remained the most intimate part of the public man.

He died in Santa Monica on September 28, 1991. Club sets still start with a nod to the man who changed the key

without asking permission.

Davis's gift was restless ears - hearing the next room before the present one emptied. Notice Nearby keeps the death date so September 28 remembers the Illinois son who made American music keep moving.

Services

Died in Santa Monica, California, September 28, 1991. Jazz trumpeter, bandleader, and composer; Kind of Blue; Birth of the Cool; Bitches Brew.

NN-OBIT-2026-H176

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