

Dr. Arthur Davis Time Line

1933 or 1934 - Dec. 5, born, Harrisburg, PA

age 5 - began studying piano, but gave it up because family did not own a piano

middle school - wanted to play trumpet or trombone, but the tuba was the only available instrument

1951 - won state competition on tuba, also began studying double bass with his high school music teacher

high school - rated top tuba and double bass player at All State Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra, and at William Penn High School

age 17 - began studies with Roger Scott (principal bassist, Philadelphia Orch.)

“Despite training with members of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Davis was roundly criticized and rejected during an audition for the Harrisburg Symphony -- conductor Edwin MacArthur intuited that the selection committee's decision was based less on Davis' talent than on his skin color, charging the judges with racism and threatening to resign if they did not revise their decision. Davis served with the orchestra while completing high school...” (allmusic.com)

1953 - offered scholarships to Eastman School, Manhattan School of Music, and Julliard

1953-1956 - Studied at Manhattan School of Music and Julliard with Anselm Fortier (NY Philharmonic bassist), where he developed a preference for steel strings. While at Julliard, he also studied with cellist Lazlo Varga, adopting the four-finger system to the double bass.

1956 - moved back to Harrisburg because his mother became ill.

by 1956, he had led his own quartet, and had been featured on radio, TV, and at colleges and clubs in PA

1958 - symphonic work with Symphony of the Air, National Orchestra, Bell Symphony, and others. Also had extensive employment in theaters, studios, and with singers and jazz groups.

1958 - July 6 - Max Roach + 4 (Roach, Davis, trumpeter Booker Little, saxophonist George Coleman, and tuba player Ray Draper) debuts at the Newport Festival. Davis played the gig with an injured finger on his right hand, from Booker Little accidentally shutting it in a car door

Davis worked with Roach through 1959 at Small's Paradise in Harlem.

“John Coltrane came into Art Davis' life while Davis was working with Max Roach's group at Small's Paradise in Harlem. Coltrane at that time was in Miles Davis' band and between sets asked Art if he would like to "practice" with him. Art agreed and Coltrane replied "How about tomorrow morning?" At 8:00 the following morning John Coltrane was in the lobby of Art's hotel and called him on the house phone. After that first meeting, the two practiced regularly for about a year, the sessions lasting for many hours without a break. It was during this year that John Coltrane wrote the tune 'Giant Steps.'" (artdavis.com)

1959 - autumn - joined Dizzy Gillespie's band and toured through early 1961

1961 - May to October - works with Coltrane in tandem with bassist Reggie Workman, recordings include *Africa/Brass* and *Olé Coltrane*

named second African-American member of the NBC staff orchestra

1962 - as a member of NBC staff orchestra, he performs for Merv Griffin, Jack Paar, and Johnny Carson, plus studio work for jingles

August - performs on Bob Dylan's debut record

1969 - Davis and cellist Earl Madison bring historic lawsuit against New York Philharmonic and conductor Leonard Bernstein for racial discrimination (Davis had auditioned and been rejected twice).

“After 15 months, the N.Y. Commission on Human Rights maintained that discrimination had not been proved for permanent jobs (which was unsuccessfully challenged by Davis, who maintained that auditions should be held behind a screen), but that the orchestra did discriminate by avoiding black artists when short-term and substitute musicians were needed. Davis did sub in the Philharmonic as a result.” (jazz.com)

Davis is blacklisted by the music industry

1971 - Merv Griffin Show moves to Los Angeles, Davis ends his tenure with NBC staff orchestra. He returns to school to study psychology, and supports himself by playing on Broadway, in ballets, and with the Moscow Circus. Also begins to teach privately at Manhattan Community College (position held until 1986).

1972 - BA Summa Cum Laude from Hunter College (triple major in psychology, music, and physics).

1975 - first release of his book, *The Arthur Davis System for Double Bass*.

1976 - MA in music from CUNY and MA in Experimental Psychology from NYU

1980 - debut album as a leader, *Reemergence*, to celebrate his resurfacing from being blacklisted

1981 or 1982 - PhD in Clinical Psychology from NYU

1982-1986 - devoted four years to psychology patients and teaching in medical centers and colleges

1986 - moves to Southern California (settled in Long Beach) to teach at Cal. State Fullerton, and maintain a private practice as a psychologist

1990 - October - Dr. Art Davis Fan Club is formed by former students and local fans

1991 - first Dr. Art Davis Scholarship is awarded

1993 - Davis founded B.A.S.S. (Better Advantages for Students and Society), a non-profit 501(c3) - B.A.S.S. awards stipends to full time college/university students in all educational disciplines

Released second printing of *The Arthur Davis System for Double Bass*

1996 - forms the Gladys Davis Memorial Scholarship for health-care majors in honor of his late wife, a health-care worker, who passed away in November 1995

2007 - July 29 - Dr. Art Davis dies of a heart attack in his home in Long Beach, California at the age of 73

references:

Ankeny, Jason. "Art Davis Biography,"

<http://allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=11:fifuxqt5ldke~T1>

"A Brief History of Dr. Art Davis" <http://www.artdavis.com/bio.htm>

"Davis, Art (Arthur D.)" <http://jazz.com/encyclopedia/davis-art-arthur-d>