

# Ornette Coleman: RIP



So the man has passed on.

Not sure how I managed to miss the news of [Ornette Coleman's death](#) at the time six weeks back, but I did. Now it's reached me I find myself locked in a bittersweet combination of sadness-at-the-passing and recollection of the joy and inspiration his music has so often provided me. Above all it was thanks to Ornette that at the age of 16 I discovered the world of free jazz, of boundless improvisational freedom bound

together with collective empathy and responsiveness in a musical embrace that – for me at least – opened up amazing new worlds.

As is the way with new enthusiasts, I quickly tried to convert others to the cause. It was uphill work. When aged 17 I was given the opportunity to select a piece of music for me and my college contemporaries to listen to, I went straight for Coleman's [Free Jazz](#), a seminal recording in the history of modern music that remains as stimulating as it is – difficult. Can't say my efforts to bring more bright young teenagers into the free/improv music fold were that successful. Afterwards, however, I consoled myself with the thought that: well, at least I *tried*.



Back to Ornette: for some reason I never did get to see the man live. But I never stopped listening to him over the years – and even played a few of his compositions with jazz-inclined university mates. Challenging? Yes, often. Capable of exquisite beauty laced with an often piercing sadness? Definitely.

So here's a small tribute to him . or rather *by* him. '[Lonely Woman](#)', an early ballad from the seminal album '[The Shape of Jazz To Come](#)'.

RIP Ornette.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNbD1JIH344&spfreload=10>