

OBITUARY

Musician James Galloway was a foundational figure in Canadian jazz

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As a boy, Jim Galloway would lie in bed captivated as he listened to strains of jazz music on the radio. American Armed Forces Radio, BBC, the Voice of America, sounds from France and Belgium and other random signals would drift into his room in a small, coastal Scottish town near the North Atlantic in the middle of the night. He could pick up broadcasts from astonishing distances – even some from the United States.

Those faraway sounds heard in his youth eventually beckoned Mr. Galloway to cross the ocean and move to Canada, where he became a foundational figure in this country's jazz scene. Not only did he go on to develop an international reputation as a performer, he also worked as a music journalist and distinguished himself as an impresario, becoming the founding director of du Maurier Downtown Jazz (now known as the TD Toronto Jazz Festival), and booking artists at the city's top clubs.

Ever the Scotsman, Mr. Galloway savoured single-malt whisky, but he was not a heavy drinker. So although he died of cirrhosis at home in Toronto on Dec. 30 at the age of 78, his illness was attributed to other causes. "He did not abuse drink," his widow, Anne Page Galloway, said. "He was not a tortured artist."

James Braidie Galloway was born on July 28, 1936, in the town of Kilwinning, North Ayrshire, Scotland, about 35 kilometres south of Glasgow. At the time, Kilwinning had a population of less than 10,000.

In his teenage years, Mr. Galloway moved to Glasgow, where he studied at the prestigious Glasgow School of Art, famously designed by architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Mr. Galloway specialized in graphic design and worked in the field briefly, but ultimately chose to become a professional jazz musician instead. He wanted to be close to the jazz centres of New York and Chicago, but figured he would get along better in a more British city, so he immigrated to Toronto in 1964.

Mr. Galloway worked as a graphic artist and teacher while he waited for his all-important music union card and began playing in the local scene. In 1966, he joined the popular Metro Stompers, soon taking over as band leader. He also accompanied many visiting musicians, including the great Kansas City jazz pianist, vocalist and bandleader Jay McShann.

Mr. Galloway got his breakthrough as an international jazz man in the mid-1970s, when he performed for five weeks in Europe with American saxophonist and clarinetist Buddy Tate. The tour included a stop at the famous Montreux Jazz Festival, in Switzerland.

As a musician, Mr. Galloway resided very much in the swing tradition. He was an accomplished player specializing in enduring, mainstream forms such as swing, bluesy New Orleans jazz and big band. His personal musical heroes included saxophonists Sidney Bechet and Leon "Chu" Berry and the clarinet player Pee Wee Russell. He also greatly admired Louis Armstrong and the big bands of Duke Ellington and Count Basie.

In the late 1970s, his affection for big band jazz led him to establish his own jazz orchestra, which he slyly named the Wee Big Band. As a player, Mr. Galloway mastered the clarinet and saxophone – he was best known for his signature playing of the curved soprano saxophone. Ross Porter, president and CEO of Toronto's Jazz FM said of the curved soprano sax, "It looks kind of like a toy, but it was anything but in his hands."

Occasionally, Mr. Galloway also displayed his fine vocal talent, as in his 2004 release *Echoes of Swing*. "Jim actually loved to sing," Ms. Page Galloway recalled.

Jazz journalist Ted O'Reilly said his friend Mr. Galloway loved to perform live more than anything, "If there was no club to play in, he would start one." In a Jazz FM radio documentary, Mr. Galloway said that his principal mission was to play live music and "leave people happier than when they arrived."

Richard Underhill, a member of the Shuffle Demons, a jazz fusion band, said, "Jim understood that jazz wasn't just an exclusive music where players turned their backs on people. He understood that it was also a face-the-audience music, a party music."

In addition to performing frequently, Mr. Galloway became a ubiquitous and respected impresario. As a booking agent, he left his mark on clubs such as Café des Copains, Bourbon Street and The Montreal Bistro, applying his skills as a musician and as a well-connected, astute programmer. Most critically, in 1986 he became founding artistic director of du

Maurier Downtown Jazz. Mr. Galloway used his international contacts to book some of the biggest names in jazz and often accompanied impromptu all-star bands at the event. In 2000, the festival premiered *Dance to the Music of Time*, a suite performed by the Wee Big Band and composed with his frequent collaborator Rosemary Galloway, a bassist to whom he was married from 1978 to 1994.

Toronto musician and online publisher Whitney Smith saw Mr. Galloway perform on several occasions and also attended a seminar he gave about various styles of saxophone playing. After the seminar, Mr. Smith recalled, he walked his instructor to his car and was impressed when he saw that Mr. Galloway drove a Mercedes. He noted that Mr. Galloway drew on his business acumen to thrive in the music scene.

"[Mr. Galloway] looked around and thought, 'Okay, this and this can be done here.' He sensed possibilities and he was very good at executing them," Mr. Smith said.

Those skills served Mr. Galloway well not only at the jazz festival, but also in his links to jazz venues and as a journalist and broadcaster about jazz, he said. Mr. Galloway hosted Toronto radio shows and contributed regularly to music magazines, including the *WholeNote*, which received its final dispatch from Mr. Galloway a month before his death.

While his own playing was decidedly in the traditional vein, Mr. Galloway had very big ears. "Jim loved Sun Ra," Mr. O'Reilly said. "You couldn't imagine two jazz musicians farther apart, in some respects, but Jim knew that Sun Ra had started in traditional jazz and then his music progressed into outer space. Jim loved it all."

Mr. Galloway's wide-ranging tastes served him well as a programmer. Mr. Underhill, who was 25 years younger, was also struck by his open-mindedness. "He was prepared to program some of the adventurous stuff we were doing," he said. Mr. Underhill, a fellow sax player, admired Mr. Galloway's "lyrical, bluesy, effortless" style. The two once jammed at a Toronto club and also participated in an attempt to break the Shuffle Demons' own world record of the most saxophones playing together at one time, with a 2009 Toronto Jazz Festival community rendition of *O Canada*.

In recent years, Mr. Galloway had been saddened by the diminishing number of live venues in Toronto, his wife noted. He also grew frustrated with what he regarded as a more commercial emphasis in programming at the TD Toronto Jazz Festival, and resigned in 2009.

By all accounts, Mr. Galloway was a warm, funny, terribly charismatic and considerate man. Mr. O'Reilly recounted that women always found him charming. One of the most charmed was Ms. Page Galloway, who met him in the mid-1990s, when her first husband, Toronto jazz supporter Ken Page, was still alive.

After Mr. Page's death, she and Mr. Galloway began an 18-year romance. In 2013, they were married in Vienna with a reception at Jazzland, one of their favourite European jazz clubs. Mr. O'Reilly, the best man, recalled that Jazzland was beautifully decorated for the event, "with white table linen and, of course, Jim played," accompanied by Viennese musicians.

Mr. Galloway, who was very cosmopolitan and spoke French fluently, always remained proud of his Scottish heritage. That extended to music. Mr. O'Reilly said that Mr. Galloway would refute the widely held notion that European music never swings, by extolling the work of drummers in Scottish pipe bands.

In 2002, the French government named him a chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Mr. Galloway leaves his wife, Anne Page Galloway, and his brother, Fred.