

Coleman Hawkins
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Coleman Randolph Hawkins was born on November 21, 1904 in St. Joseph, Missouri. He is considered to be the *Father of the Tenor Saxophone*.

Coleman's mother was musically inclined and she began teaching him to play the piano when he was just five years old. Coleman learned to play the cello at age seven and he began playing tenor saxophone at age nine. Coleman studied music at Washburn College in Topeka, Kansas and pioneered the Solo Saxophone. In 1913 saxophone players were considered second string and the saxophone was thought to be a marching band instrument only. Coleman's expertise with the saxophone soon changed that perception.

In 1921 Coleman joined *Mamie Smith's* Blues Band and followed the band to New York City in 1923. He left Smith's band shortly after arriving in New York and joined *Fletcher Henderson's* Swing Band. He played with Henderson from 1923 to 1934. *Louis Armstrong* joined the band in 1924 and was a major influence on Coleman's future playing style. Many of the new generation of Jazz soloists such as *Miles Davis* and *Dizzy Gillespie* credit Coleman with being a major influence on their styles.

Coleman recorded the ballad *One Hour* with *Red McKenzie* in 1929 and toured Great Britain, Holland, and France from 1934 to 1939, returning to the United States only when war seemed eminent in Europe. He formed his own band recorded his first top of the charts hit, *Body and Soul* in 1939. The band broke up in 1940 and for the rest of his career Coleman played primarily as a solo artist.

Coleman recorded *Woody and You* with Dizzy Gillespie in 1944 and also played briefly with *Thelonious Monk*. Coleman continued to record in the years

1946 to 1966 and made several more European tours.

Coleman Hawkins began drinking heavily in the mid sixties. He died of liver disease on May 19, 1969 in New York, New York.

Sources:

Encyclopedia Britannica

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Atlanta Music Group (AMG)