



A native of Baltimore, Gary Bartz ventured to New York City to attend the Juilliard School in 1958. At the time, performers such as Thelonius Monk, Ornette Coleman, and Miles Davis were playing at Birdland and the city's other premiere clubs every night, and Bartz regularly snuck in to see them.

In the 1960s, Bartz joined the Max Roach/Abbey Lincoln Group and the Charles Mingus Jazz Workshop, quickly earning a reputation as the greatest alto saxophonist since Cannonball Adderley. In 1965, after meeting the group at his parents' nightclub, Bartz joined Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and recorded *Soulfinger*, his recording debut. Around the same time, he began working with McCoy Tyner, and their relationship deepened the influence of John Coltrane on Bartz.

In 1970, Bartz received a call from Miles Davis, who asked Bartz to perform with his band at the historic Isle of Wight Festival. In the same year, Bartz also formed his own group, Ntu Troop, after the Bantu word for "unity." Ntu blended soul, funk, African folk music, hard bop, and avant-garde jazz on such albums as *I've Known Rivers* and *Other Bodies*, based on the poetry of Langston Hughes, as well as *Music is My Sanctuary*, *Love Affair*, *Another Earth*, and *Home*.

Overall, Bartz has recorded more than 40 solo albums and over 200 as a guest artist. More recently, he released *Coltrane Rules: Tao of a*

Music Warrior, Live at the Jazz Standard Volume 1 and Volume 2, and several others, on his own label, OYO, which is named for the Nigerian tribe and the acronym “Own Your Own.” He was also spotlighted in the “Blindfold Test” section of DownBeat magazine in January 2008, and he continues to perform with McCoy Tyner in such cities as Tokyo and Los Angeles.

<https://www.oberlin.edu/gary-bartz>