

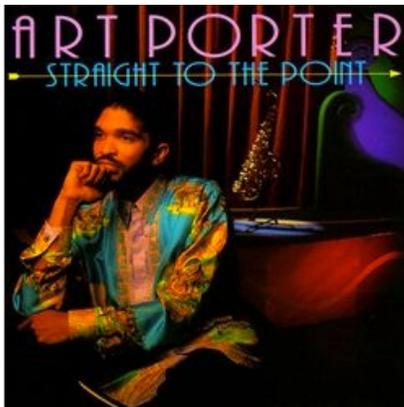
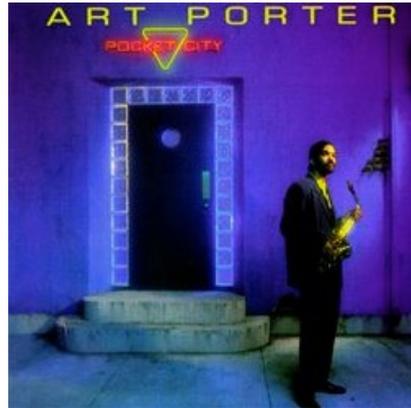


Art Porter

3 August 1961 - 23 November 1996

When George Howard passed, I thought no one would have that unique style and then I ran into Art Porter. He reminded me so much of George, that I nearly forgot about him. Art took that style and added some of his own flavor to it. It was brighter, more emotional with deeper flight and thought. Art was a blessing and a tragedy. His talents and skills were truly a blessing to hear, but to have died so young when in truth he was just getting started seemed almost criminal.

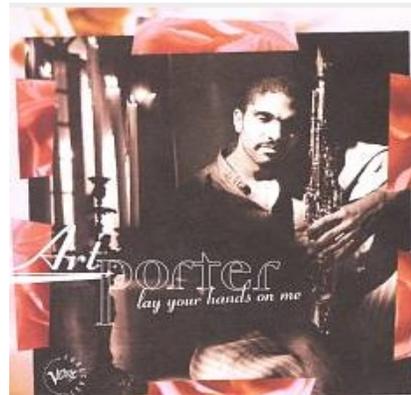
I have all of Art's recordings. I had them before he was lost. I truly treasure them now for he is a part of Jazz history that many may overlook due to his short history. I just knew Art was going places. I wanted to see him playing with some of the greats (Bob James, George Duke, Winton Marsalis, etc) and at Jazz festival's galore. I was driving from Pontiac to Southfield Michigan on that fateful day it was announced.



I was stunned, I could not believe it. No I said several times. I changed the radio station because I could not believe it. When the other station confirmed it I began to cry like I had lost my best friend and have never met him. I pulled over to the side of the road and wept uncontrollably. I felt cheated and then I began to cry even more for his wife and kids. I knew the pain they were going through and there was nothing, nothing no matter how much I wish I could fix it, I could say or do to make them feel any better. Hell, I was still in shock

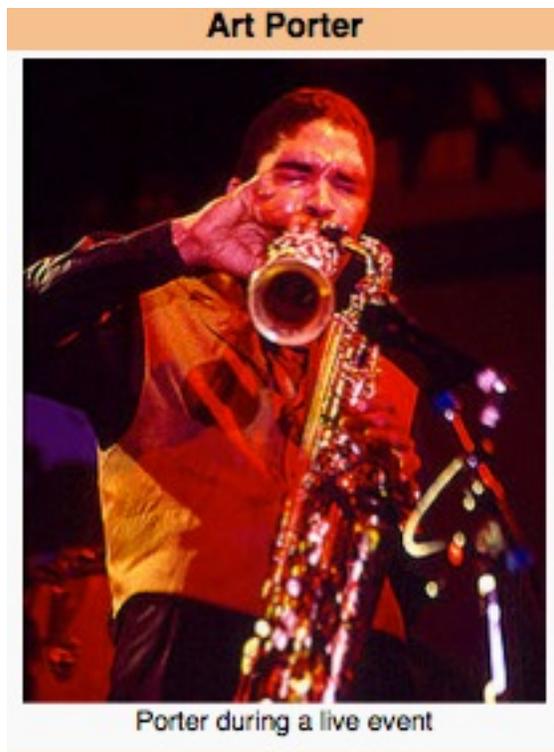
days later myself.

I first learned of Art Porter like I did George Howard, at a small army PX in Soesterberg, Netherlands. Now all I had left were their CD's and great music. Critics did not have much to say since Art was just getting started in terms of most jazz music careers. But for me when I heard about Art, I felt I had been robbed, robbed of the future of music that I knew was going to be great as time passed by. It has affected me to this day. The new artists that hit the circuit I do not get into like I use to. Like a soldier saying when he is in combat he does not want to get to know his fellow soldiers. He figures they may not be around long. I felt I did not ever want to feel that shock and sadness again. When a Jazz musician dies after a long career, I give tribute for their contributed to society in their own way. But Art never got that chance to show what I and many others knew he was capable of, and that, is the most hurtful part of this tragedy.



This piece (Broken Promise) still brings tears to my eyes to this very day.

Art my brother, I never met you. Did not need to because you introduced some wonderful pieces to me that I thank God and you for. Play your ass off up there brother, like I knew you would have done here.



Bill Sommerville