

# Brian Jackson

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Hi, my name is Brian Jackson. I'm one half the duo of [Gil Scott-Heron](#) and Brian Jackson. I'm a pianist and sometimes flautist, and somewhere along the way, I learned how to sing and play at the same time.

## Collaborating with Jazz Is Dead

I met the manager, or the founder of [Jazz Is Dead](#) named [Andrew Lojero](#). He got in contact. And he had told me about a project that he was interested in doing, basically forming a new label called Jazz Is Dead. And he was experimenting with me. I suppose I was a guinea pig. I was the first artist that was invited into the studio, into [Linear Labs](#) studio with [Adrian Younge](#) and [Ali Shaheed Muhammad](#) to see, you know, what would happen if various collaborations between Ali and Adrian happened. I think it went well because they went on to collaborate with eight other artists. All of the artists were older artists, [Roy Ayers](#), [Doug Carn](#), [João Donato](#), [Marcos Valle](#), and [Azimuth](#). It's been quite a series, and I've been very happy to work with them.

# Shigeto's Remix of "Nancy Wilson"

One of the songs on that album, [Jazz is Dead 008](#) is a song that we ended up dedicating to the late, great singer [Nancy Wilson](#). She was one of my favorite artists, favorite vocalists, and a very huge influence on Victor Brown, who was one of the early singers of my band, The Midnight Band, that I had with Gil Scott-Heron. She had just passed away. I think pretty recently. I wanted to dedicate a song to her because she meant a lot to me and to my mom, who had just passed away not too long ago as well. When it came time for the remix album that Adrienne and Ali had planned, the song "Nancy Wilson" was chosen to be remixed by the artist named [Shigeto](#). He did just a fantastic job on it. I like it. In fact, I like it probably better than the original.

## What Gets Brian Jackson in a Recording Studio

The thing that can get me into the studio, probably the quickest is a connection with the artists and the music that they make. And as it turns out, I'm very eclectic. I have very eclectic tastes. So I've ended up in the studio with artists like [Eugene Chadbourne](#) with artists like [Alabama 3](#), with Ayers. It goes on and on. It's so many people. I can barely remember. [Kool & the Gang](#), [Will Downing](#), [Gwen Guthrie](#)... It just has to be music that I can *feel* and music that I feel that I can contribute to. And because I like so many different kinds of music, the range happens to be quite broad.

# Brian's New Year's Resolution

You know, every year, I make a New Year's resolution, and this probably will be no different. The resolution that I usually make is not to make any resolutions because I probably won't keep them if I make them a resolution. I just decide that I'm going to try and continue to do whatever it is that I didn't do this year.

# Brian Jackson's Introduction to His Mix

We're going to begin today's show with [John Coltrane's](#) version of the song "Out of this World" from his album called [Coltrane](#). It's a song that influenced me greatly because of the playing of first of all, John's incredible way of translating standard songs into something otherworldly. Then you have to also think about the tremendous artistry and the chordal textures of [McCoy Tyner](#), whose birthday is coming up on December 11th, as well as [Elvin Jones's](#) incredible stick work and the fantastic [Jimmy Garrison](#) on bass. These kinds of moods and these kinds of modes that they came up with was something that influenced me greatly. John Coltrane: "Out of this World."

Up next is a song I only became familiar with recently. It's a song called "Parallel Lean/ Home Is Where the Hatred Is" by Brian Jackson, from my album, *Gotta Play*. I don't know what else I can say about it. I hope you enjoy it. Well, I can say something about it. Originally, it was going to be my version of "Home Is Where the Hatred Is" by Gil Scott-Heron that appeared on his album, [Pieces of a Man](#), which we worked on together. In the end, we came up with kind of an interlude that took over the whole song. And so I decided that I would sing the song "Home Is Where the Hatred Is." I

would kind of juxtapose that the lyrics over this new tune, this new theme. And to top it off, we asked Gil to come in and do some spoken word over it. And the effect is kind of electrifying. Just for a minute I just want to say what "Home Is Where the Hatred Is" means to me. It means no judgment. We all have our problems, and we all have our issues. Addiction is an illness. And you know, this song is really about not alienating people because of their illness. It meant a lot to me because at that time, Gil was going through his own problems with his illness. It was my way of saying, I understand.

Following that, [Aretha Franklin](#), with "[96 Tears](#)" from probably my favorite album of Aretha's. No, that's not true because almost every album of Aretha's is my favorite album. But this one really touched me. I think that you're gonna find out that a lot of the songs that are that are on my playlist here are tunes that affected me. So they're a bit older. They're from a time in my life that that I was I was a teen and I was I was still trying to figure out my place in music. But I told you have eclectic tastes. And here is another side of some of the music I love.

[Ahmad Jamal](#), "Emily" from his album, [Tranquility](#). Ahmad Jamal is like McCoy Tyner, one of the greatest influences of my life. I can remember hearing Ahmad Jamal's album *Poinciana: One Night Only* as a little boy, and I always loved the way he commanded the range of the keyboard, all the way from the bass all the way up to the highest notes. "Emily" is no exception. And here he is, enjoy.

From [Pat Martino](#) we will hear the song "Masquerada" from the album *Starbright*. Sadly, Pat passed away just a few weeks ago. I had the opportunity to sit in with his with his band actually to play a gig with him at [Birdland](#), which was my first time playing at Birdland in New York City as well. I learned a lot during that gig. At the rehearsals, he

kicked my butt. I have no shame in saying that because Pat Martino was one of the greatest and one of the kindest people that I've ever met. Pat Martino: "Masquerada."

"Little Church" by [Miles Davis](#), written by a phenomenal multi-instrumentalist. [Hermeto to Pascoal](#). From his album, [Live-Evil](#). I really don't need to say much about Miles Davis. Again, one of the greatest influences of my life, and Hermeto Pasquale, even though I learned about him much later on. If you don't know who he is, I encourage you to check out his music. He is a genius.

[Eugene McDaniels](#): "Headless Heroes" from the album, [Headless Heroes of the Apocalypse](#). I had a bit of a problem choosing which song to use from this album because they are all stellar compositions. Eugene sings, composed all of these songs, the lyrics, and the music. You might know Eugene McDaniels's work from the song made popular by [Les McCann](#) and [Eddie Harris](#), "[Compared to What](#)," also performed by [Roberta Flack](#). Eugene McDaniels, also in a previous life, penned the song "[100 Pounds of Clay](#)," which was a pop song, a very well known pop song, in the I think the 60s, probably. But, Eugene McDaniels, lyrically, he is one of the revolutionary lyricists of the 70s. And just like so many albums that came out in the year 1971, including "Pieces of a Man" by Gil Scott-Heron, it stands the test of time. Eugene McDaniels "Headless Heroes."

And speaking of Les McCann, "Someday We'll Meet Again," from his album, [Another Beginning](#). I don't have a lot to say about Les McCann. I think if you listen to my music, you will hear a lot of the influences of Les McCann in my music. There's a very percussive thing that he does, where he seems to play on one note, almost as if he's playing on a drum. And this is something that I tried to incorporate into my music as well. Les

McCann, also a fantastic singer, and one who influenced both Gil and I. Les McCann: "Someday We'll Meet Again."

Our second to last song, [Alice Coltrane](#): "Ptah, The El Daoud" from the album of the same name. What is it with these Coltranes? There is something that is celestial and extraterrestrial about Alice Coltrane's playing. She's one of the most spiritual beings that I have ever heard play the piano and the harp. She was a tremendous influence to the artist Shigeto, who did the remix of our song, "Nancy Wilson," from *Jazz Is Dead 008*. She has tremendous influence to me. In fact, Gil and I, on the album, [It's your World](#), recorded one of our songs called "Gospel Train." It was one that we used to listen to quite a bit. And at some point, Gil decided he would write some lyrics to it. It's something you should check out if you get a chance. Alice Coltrane: "Ptah, The El Daoud."

And we will close today's show with [Jimi Hendrix's](#) "Belly Button Window," from his album [The Cry of Love](#). Jimmy is a blues guitarist above all else. And I think that a lot of people don't really get to connect with that reality. Because of the guitars, the electric guitars, and all of the the crashes and bags and the pyrotechnics that go along with that that you think about when you hear Jimi Hendrix, which is why I chose this song. Because even though Jimmy was a tremendous influence on Gil and me both, this is a side that most people don't get a chance to hear enough of. I present to you Jimi Hendrix: "Belly Button Window," from his album, *The Cry of Love*.

This wraps up the first-ever episode of Genius and Soul, and I'm happy to be the first guest deejay. I hope you enjoyed it. Stay tuned for more.

Thank you.