

A Tribute to Master Artist Donivan Bailey

Missouri Folk Arts Program

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by Lisa Higgins, Director
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We are incredibly saddened to learn that Donivan Bailey, a 2015 Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program master artist, has died unexpectedly.



Mr. Bailey taught his apprentice Gerald Austin the art of jazz drumming, including swing and comping patterns, improvisation, and KC's unique jazz heritage. As Mr. Bailey said in his TAAP application: "There is truly a rich heritage of jazz in Kansas City, and my goal is to help keep this tradition alive . . ."

Mr. Bailey's father was pianist at a church with a rich gospel tradition, and young Donivan sang and played piano there before he picked up drumming as a teenager from the church's drummer. Bailey then excelled with the help of a high school band director with a passion for KC jazz.

Mr. Bailey noted that he trained both academically and traditionally, pointing out mentorship from drummer Leon Brady, organist Everette Devan, and the late great saxophonist Ahmad Alaadeen. Bailey said "Alaadeen showed me how to go beyond technique and taught me the melodic potential of drums and fostered a new creativity in my playing."

We extend heartfelt sympathy to Mr. Bailey's family, friends, and fellow musicians. RIP. Donivan's family has posted an obituary here:

http://www.memorialsolutions.com/memsol.cgi?user_id=1887880