Earl Newman

Artist Earl Newman lives in the little Oregon town of Summit, which is close to Philomath. He’s been drawing and silk screening for 50 years. His posters have appeared at jazz festivals and art shows all over the U.S. This art show features posters Earl made for the Monterey Jazz Festival. The Monterey Jazz Festival is the world’s longest continuously running jazz festival (it started in 1958).

His prints feature legendary musicians like Ray Charles, BB King, Etta James, Dizzy Gillespie, Dave Brubeck, Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Tony Bennet, and many more!

As a young man in the 1960s Earl moved to California. He started to produce silkscreened posters for local coffee houses, and sold cool little art pieces at Venice Beach. He was a hit! His father wanted him to have a job where he wore a white shirt and tie, but Earl knew he was an artist and wanted to wear clothes that he could create in. In 1963, Newman was given the opportunity to design his first promotional poster for the Monterey Jazz Festival; it features trumpeter Joe Gordon. Some of the musicians at the Sunday, September 22, 1963 Monterey Jazz Festival were Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock.

Some people think these posters were printed by a machine but that’s not correct, Earl Newman made all these posters by hand! He used the silkscreen process of pressing ink through a stenciled mesh screen to create a printed design. Earl printed extra copies of each Monterey Jazz Festival poster so there are color differences between each (if you have 2 to compare). In his biography Earl expresses why he enjoys printing, “I’ve been able to reproduce my designs in volume, usually 100 at a time. It’s like having 100 canvases on which to experiment, using different colors of papers and inks, varying the color blends as I go along thus no two prints are alike.”

Newman’s original posters for the Monterey Jazz Festival span the time frame from 1963 - 2014; each one hand printed in the artist’s home in the full size of 25” x 35”. The artist created the famous Monterey Jazz serigraphs for 50 years. The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. has a complete set of his posters. The Benton County Historical Society also has a complete collection thanks to a generous donation from Earl Newman, Scott Gentry, and Ken Haines.
How many jazz greats do you recognize?