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In February of 2016, Prince started his final musical tour showcasing his skill as a performer and songwriter. He died from a fentanyl overdose the week after the tour ended. In an interview before the tour, he stated that he designed this tour to challenge himself. I guess he must have passed the test because shortly after he left us and went on to the next world.

This tour, known as the *Piano and a Microphone* tour, was a bit different than much of Prince's work as he was better known as a guitar virtuoso in conjunction with a band. Many great musicians are multi-instrumentalists and Prince had done piano on his albums before, but this was a raw display of his piano skill and vocals in a way he also was not accustomed to. The performances in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada had no set list and allowed him to play what he wanted in any order. He felt that this was a challenge as well as a freedom since he was

not in any way obligated to a band.

One of the most exciting and also heart-wrenching parts of this tour is that Prince commissioned Yamaha to build for him a purple concert grand piano. It was stylized and tonally built to his specifications. It was delivered right at the end of the tour and he used it for one performance at his Paisley Park a week before he died. It was a shade of purple specifically chosen to match a shade of purple of a couch in his home.



Besides being specifically purple, this piano had an intricate and custom tonal system within it. It was an acoustic piano, but it had electronics and pickups inside of it that allowed sounds to be emitted from a secondary audio source. The sounds were adjusted to Prince's request. It was a rush job and kept Yamaha on its toes; they were able to finish it in three months and Prince was very proud of it when he received it.

Prince was a perfectionist; he knew exactly what he wanted and was not satisfied until everything was as it should be. He put out dozens of albums throughout his career and made a plethora of recordings that were never released because they were not polished to his demanding standards. This explains why he was a virtuoso because he never let a bum note slip by. He actually would force his band to watch a recording of their performance immediately after each concert and point out any mistakes to the band members to insure perfection the next time around.

I only recently started listening to Prince. It is certainly different than what I am used to listening to but it is beginning to grow on me. Once I discovered this tour, I knew I had to look into his music especially considering how famous he was.

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