

OBITUARY

STEPHEN EDWARD BRAUDE: THE JAZZ PHILOSOPHER 1945–2026



Stephen E. Braude—philosopher, jazz pianist, prize-winning 3D photographer, and relentless investigator of the unexplained—died 3 January 2026, leaving behind a legacy as one of the most brilliant and fascinating intellects of his generation. We had been friends for over four decades, and what I want to offer here is a deliberately personal portrait of the man I knew.

Steve was a virtuoso—of ideas, of language, of the art of living on one's own terms. He showed us that one could be a world-class philosopher and still be the life of the party. Whether dismantling memory-trace theories and mechanistic models of mind, delighting our ears at PA conventions with his jazz compositions, or plunging into the gritty details of table levitations, he did so with panache and an intensity few could match.

A lifelong provocateur, Steve loved to pick apart seemingly obvious assumptions and shake people out of complacency. He deployed his formidable critical skills against fellow parapsychologists as readily as against pseudosceptics. And while many of us were content to report cautious statistics and modest effects, he unapologetically defended the messy, spectacular reality

of macro-psychokinesis—insisting that historical cases, when treated with intellectual honesty, could be as evidentially rich as laboratory studies.

Yet even when sharply critical, his aim was never demolition for its own sake, but clarity, rigor, and intellectual courage. Beneath that fierce intellect was a man of genuine warmth, deep friendship, and astonishing artistic sensitivity. Steve didn't just play jazz—he understood its soul. He didn't merely listen to music; he approached sound as an act of reverence. And he didn't simply take photographs—he mastered the beauty of the third dimension.

He authored more than half a dozen major books and dozens of articles that reshaped how philosophers and psychical researchers think about mind, causation, and evidence. He served as president of the Parapsychological Association and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, and was a frequent contributor to the work of the Society for Psychical Research, which awarded him the Myers Memorial Medal—an honour reserved for those who have advanced psychical research with distinction.

Steve Braude is survived by a body of work that will continue to unsettle and inspire for decades, and by friends who will forever miss his laughter, his brilliance, and his singular, uncompromising spirit. The world is, quite simply, less interesting without him.

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