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Subject: Play On, Play On, Isaac Hayes  
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Hayes, Award-Winning Soul Legend, 'South Park' Star, Dies at 65

By Michael Tsang and Joseph Galante  
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Aug. 11 (Bloomberg) -- Soul legend Isaac Hayes, who won Grammy and Academy awards for the theme to the 1971 film "Shaft" and voiced the character "Chef" in the hit comedy series "South Park," died yesterday in Memphis, Tennessee. He was 65.

Family members found Hayes lying unconscious next to a running treadmill in his basement around 1 p.m. local time, said Steve Shular, a spokesman for the Shelby County Sheriff's Office in a telephone interview. Hayes was pronounced dead at Baptist East Hospital. No autopsy is planned, Shular said.

Hayes, who co-wrote "Soul Man" and "You Don't Know Like I Know," won an Oscar for best musical score for "Shaft," according to his Web site. The song and the movie score also won Grammy awards for best original score and movie theme. Hayes, whose work influenced disco, urban-contemporary music and rap, was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2002.

"He has been hugely influential on the rap movement as both a spoken-word pioneer and larger-than-life persona who's influenced everyone from Barry White to Puff Daddy," a statement from the Hall of Fame's Web site said.

In the 1990s, Hayes found a second career as the voice of Chef, the cafeteria cook and self-professed ladies man who became a mentor to the students of the "South Park" animated series on Viacom Inc.'s Comedy Central.

'Perfect Alter Ego'

The character was "the perfect alter ego for Hayes," said his Web site.

He left the series in 2006 after the show lampooned his religion, the Church of Scientology, CNN said.

Hayes, who became known for his shaved head, dark glasses and fur coats, was born to a sharecropper's family in Covington, Tennessee, on Aug. 20, 1942, according to his Web site. He was orphaned in infancy and was raised by his maternal grandparents.

He played saxophone and piano in high school and performed in ``doo-wop" and jazz bands. Hayes turned down seven college scholarships for music, and instead landed a job playing piano with saxophonist Floyd Newman's band in West Arkansas.

Newman was a staff musician at Memphis's Stax Records recording studio and Hayes eventually found work there playing keyboards. His first paid sessions were with Otis Redding in early 1964. Hayes wrote some 200 songs at Stax with David Porter, including ``Hold On, I'm Coming," ``You Don't Know Like I Know," ``When Something Is Wrong With My Baby," and the R&B Grammy award-winning ``Soul Man" for Sam & Dave.

His 1969 solo album, ``Hot Buttered Soul," was No. 1 on the Billboard R&B chart for 10 weeks and stayed on the pop chart for 81 weeks, according to his Web site.

The album established Hayes's stardom and set out his trademark style of taking pop songs and stretching them out. ``By the Time I Get to Phoenix" was originally a hit single written by Jimmy Webb and made famous by Glen Campbell in 1967. Hayes's version ran to almost 19 minutes, with an eight-minute spoken introduction.

Hayes also performed in more than three dozen films, including ``I'm Gonna 'Git You, Sucka" (1988) and ``Guilty as Charged" (1991), as well as TV series such as ``Miami Vice," ``The A-Team" and ``The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air."

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