

CHRISTIAN McBRIDE

Carolyn and Bill Powers Creative Chair for Jazz

For almost two decades, Christian McBride has been widely recognized as one of the most original American musicians to emerge from the jazz scene. A Grammy Award-winning virtuoso of the acoustic and electric bass, he is recognized as an accomplished composer and arranger whose collaborations as a bassist read like a "who's who" of quintessential artists of our time. Over the past 17 years, McBride has been featured on more than 200 recordings, and composed nearly 40 musical works along with dozens of arrangements.

McBride began his tenure as the Carolyn and Bill Powers Creative Chair for Jazz for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association in 2006. Working with the organization year-round, McBride oversees jazz programming at Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Hollywood Bowl, building upon the Philharmonic's presence in the musical community as a leading presenter of jazz.

Since McBride's inaugural 2006 season as Creative Chair for Jazz, the Hollywood Bowl has been home to stellar performances by jazz greats Herbie Hancock, George Benson, Al Jarreau, James Brown, Al Green, Isaac Hayes, Nancy Wilson, B.B. King, and more. The Jazz series at Walt Disney Concert Hall has featured Wynton Marsalis, Pat Metheny, Brad Mehldau, McCoy Tyner, Charles Mingus' Epitaph Orchestra, among others.

"As Creative Chair for Jazz for the LA Phil, I'm able to fulfill many artistic visions I would not have been able to pursue elsewhere as well as build upon the LA Phil's commitment to presenting the finest musicians in two of the world's most iconic venues - Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Hollywood Bowl," says McBride. "I'm very excited about furthering this tradition of music excellence, and presenting exciting programs to future audiences."

Christian McBride's talent as a player is only half of what makes him such a respected, in-demand and incredible busy individual. The portrait is completed by a mere mid-thirty-something man whose capacity and willingness to contribute to the music community seems endless.

Born on May 31, 1972 in Philadelphia, McBride began playing electric bass at age 9, followed by acoustic bass two years later. His first mentors were his father, Lee Smith (a renowned bassist in Philly) and his great uncle, Howard Cooper (a disciple of the jazz avant-garde). While intensely studying classical music, McBride's love for jazz also blossomed. Upon his 1989 graduation from Philadelphia's fertile High School for the Creative and Performing Arts (C.A.P.A.), he was awarded a partial scholarship to attend the world-renowned Juilliard School in New York City to study with the legendary bassist, Homer Mensch. Before

moving to the Big Apple, the already in-demand bassist toured Europe with the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, and the U.S. with the classical jazz fusion group, Free Flight.

McBride never had a chance to settle into his Juilliard studies. Within the first two weeks of the semester, he joined saxophonist Bobby Watson's band, Horizon. He also started working around New York at clubs such as Bradley's and the Village Gate with John Hicks, Kenny Barron, Larry Willis and Gary Bartz. After one year at Juilliard, McBride made a critical decision to leave school to tour with trumpeter Roy Hargrove's first band, electing "experience with as many musicians as possible" as the best teacher. In August of 1990, he landed a coveted position in trumpeter Freddie Hubbard's band until January of 1993.

In 1991, legendary bassist Ray Brown invited McBride to join him and John Clayton in the trio SuperBass. After being hailed "Hot Jazz Artist" of 1992 by Rolling Stone, McBride continued to prove it as a member of guitarist Pat Metheny's "Special Quartet," which included drum master Billy Higgins and saxophonist Joshua Redman. While recording and touring with Redman the following year, McBride signed to Verve Records in the summer of 1994, recording his first CD as a leader, *Gettin' to It*, followed by *Number Two Express* (1996), the soul-jazz fusion project *A Family Affair* (1998) and the critically acclaimed *SCI-FI* (2000). The following year, he dipped into hip hop with a side project dubbed *The Philadelphia Experiment*, a "jam band"-inspired CD that reunited McBride with his high school friend, drummer Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson (leader of The Roots) and featured keyboardist Uri Caine and guitarist Pat Martino.

In 1995, McBride received a prestigious commission from Jazz at Lincoln Center to compose "Bluesin' in Alphabet City." The world premier performance at Alice Tully Hall featured Wynton Marsalis, McBride, and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra.

In 1998, McBride was a panelist at former President Clinton's town hall meeting on "Racism in the Performing Arts" and the following year was invited to participate in Stanford University's panel on "Black Performing Arts in Mainstream America." This same year, the Portland (ME) Arts Society and the National Endowment for the Arts awarded McBride with a commission to write "The Movement, Revisited," McBride's dramatic musical portrait of the civil rights struggle of the 1960's written and arranged for quartet and a 30-piece gospel choir.

In the year 2000, McBride received an invitation from Sting to become a key figure in his 2001 *All This Time* CD, DVD and tour. Then in 2002, McBride supported George Duke by becoming a member of his band and recording on his landmark album *Face the Music*, the legendary keyboardist's first album on his own recording label, BPM. In 2003, McBride released an album on Warner Bros. Records titled *Vertical Vision*, a blazing recording that introduced the current incarnation of the Christian McBride Band.

Throughout the last decade, McBride has toured or recorded with artists as varied as Gary Bartz, Kenny Barron, Roy Hargrove, Bobby Watson, McCoy Tyner, George Benson, Peabo Bryson, Natalie Cole, George Duke, Benny Golson, Johnny Griffin, Issac Hayes, Herbie Hancock, Bobby Hutcherson, Chaka Khan, Abbey Lincoln, Chick Corea, Carley Simon, David Sanborn, Queen Latifah and Pat Metheny. Naturally, there will be more collaborations and sideman gigs, and he will continue to lead the Christian McBride Band, which released *Live at Tonic on Rope-a-Dope Records* in 2006. This album was compiled from two nights—two shows apiece— recorded at the Manhattan/East Village hot spot, Tonic. A kinetic concert spirit was captured with both college students and hip hoppers in the crowd, resulting in a perfect atmosphere for experimentation. The first set each night featured just the band (NAMES), but for the second sets, specials guests blessed the stage: DJ Logic, Scratch (The Roots), guitarists Charlie Hunter and Eric Krasno (Soulive), pianist Jason Moran, trumpeter Rashawn Ross and violinist Jenny Scheinman (Bill Frisell).

McBride continues to fulfill his career-long dedication to making jazz accessible to young people as both the co-director of The Jazz Museum in Harlem and Artistic Director of the Jazz Aspen Snowmass Summer Program. He also plays an integral role in several of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association's education and community programs, including neighborhood concerts, master classes, and Toyota Symphonies for Youth performances.

There have been very few artists who truly embody the genuine, heart-felt passion for music in all areas as has Christian McBride. By boldly continuing to leave his mark in areas of musical performance, composition, education and advocacy, he is destined to be a force in music for decades to come.