

arts
education
njpac



christian
mcbride

the david g. berger
master class series



about christian mcbride

After nearly 35 years in the music industry, eight-time GRAMMY® Award-winner Christian McBride, a prodigy of the acoustic and electric bass, stands at the top of the jazz world. McBride has made a name for himself as a bassist, arranger, educator, activist and administrator. Born on May 31, 1972, McBride was raised in Philadelphia, PA, picking up bass guitar at age nine. He began his musical journey with the support of his father and great-uncle. After graduating from the Philadelphia High School for Creative and Performing Arts, he moved to New York in 1989 to pursue classical studies under Homer Mensch at Julliard.

Shortly after beginning college, McBride traveled with Bobby Watson's band Horizon to experience what it was like to tour with a jazz band. Afterward, Christian left Julliard and relied on his experiences with active musicians to educate him in the field. McBride released *Gettin' to It* in 1995, his debut album as a bandleader. In 1997, he spoke at Bill Clinton's town hall on racism in the performing arts. In 2000, he started the still-active Christian McBride Band. He was named Artistic Director of the Jazz Aspen Snowmass Summer Sessions (2000), Co-Director of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem (2005) and the Second Creative Chair for Jazz of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association (2005). In 2013, he created *The Movement*

Revisited: A Musical Portrait of Four Icons, a suite dedicated to prominent civil rights leaders Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

While McBride took inspiration from many leaders, he's never been shy in admitting that Ray Brown is an excellent source of influence, stating, "For my money, Ray Brown is the greatest living bass player. Every great thing that's happened on bass since Ray Brown — all of us point back to him. That's where it started, you know. Ray Brown is definitely a walking master, and to get to play with him is obviously an opportunity that no one should ever pass up."

Though McBride has no shortage of projects and responsibilities on his plate, he believes "in the art of working with people," stating, "I feel you can always compensate for whatever skills you don't have just by learning to get along with and communicate with people. Herbie Hancock is the master of that ... and Quincy Jones is the ultimate master." McBride's passion for collaborating is evident in his features on numerous albums, as well as touring and recording with artists such as David Sanborn, Chick Corea, Chaka Khan, Natalie Cole, George Benson, Joe Henderson, Betty Carter and Milt Jackson.

accolades

- Four-time GRAMMY® Award winner for Best Jazz Instrumental Album
- Three-time GRAMMY® Award winner for Best Large Ensemble Jazz Album
- GRAMMY® Award winner for Best Improvised Jazz Solo
- Composed “Bluesin’ in Alphabet City,” performed by Wynton Marsalis
- Released 18 albums as a bandleader
- Received 18 GRAMMY® Award nominations
- Recipient of The National Arts Club Medal of Honor (2021)

In a world where hip hop and jazz collide, it’s no surprise that Christian McBride has his own show on SiriusXM radio called *The Lowdown: Conversations with Christian*. Although, on the show and at club appearances, he becomes DJ Brother Mister. This alter ego can be seen playing Newport Jazz Festival as far back as 2015. DJ Brother Mister spins tracks that blend R&B, funk and soul from 1966 – 1986 on original analog vinyl. The unique blend of sounds also lends to a unique visual experience, as DJ Brother Mister always includes his electric bass during a set.

The name DJ Brother Mister comes from McBride’s relationship with the late James Brown, who called everyone “mister” as a sign of respect and reverence. In 2006, McBride was the music director for Brown’s show at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles. There, he was introduced by Brown as “Brother Mister McBride.” McBride speaks of this moment with great pride, as he knew he was a trusted person in Brown’s circle.

DJ Brother Mister Productions became an imprint under Mack Avenue Music Group, and features both established and developing artists. He plays at the Montclair Jazz Festival, Monterey Jazz Festival, NPR’s *Jazz Night In* and on Sirius Radio. Brother Mister Productions currently represents guitarist Dan Wilson, trumpeter and vocalist Jennifer Hartswick and the quartet East Axis.



“**Make no mistake: this music is for everyone. Jazz is not an exclusive, elite club.** Go ahead, listen to your Snoop Doggy Dogg, Pearl Jam, Garth Brooks, but add a little Ellington, Basie and Coltrane to your life as well.”

— Christian McBride

seed questions to consider

1. How has the value of a degree in music helped increase attendance at certain higher education institutions?
2. What are some ways mentorship and advocacy have changed the landscape for musicians?
3. How does the collaborative nature of jazz allow space for innovation in the art form?

vocabulary

Bebop

A style of jazz developed in the early 1940s that explores complex harmony and rhythms, practiced by Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Kenny Clarke, Charlie Christian and Bud Powell. Typical elements include smaller bands, rapid improvisation, syncopated phrasing, use of higher intervals (ninth, 11th and 13th) and a ground in the string bass rather than the bass drum. In bebop, a reliance on tone quality is traded for expressiveness.

Break

A transitional passage in which a soloist is featured and can improvise freely



Chase

Two soloists, such as the string bass and saxophone, taking alternating four-bar phrases to mimic a conversation or a back-and-forth

Free Jazz

A jazz style developed in the early-to-mid 1960s, involving “free” playing, improvisation and an absence of set chord patterns or time signatures, emphasizing a disregard for conventional jazz elements

Fusion

A late-'60s style of jazz, practiced by Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Miles Davis, Chick Corea and others, as a reaction to the eclipse of jazz and rock music, involving greater use of repetition, non-improvised passages, simplified harmonies and time signatures

Improv

Short for improvisation. The practice of spontaneously creating melodies through chords, time signatures or harmonies that are determined in the moment by players

Modulation

The establishment of a new key, often through a series of harmonic progressions. In standard examples, modulations occur at the beginning of the bridge.

Swing

A rhythmic pattern popularized by big bands in the 1930s, in which musicians treat eighth notes differently based on their position in the measure (i.e., where the first pair of written eighth notes is played longer than the second, and the second tends to receive a slight accent)

Syncopation

The process of accenting upbeats or weak beats while displacing the beats that are used as strong beats in most genres of music

Transpose

To write or perform a piece in a key other than the original key by changing the pitch of each note to fit a new key signature, most often to accommodate the range of a vocalist or another instrument

Vamp

A section of a piece or a constantly repeated musical line designed to be repeated as often as necessary, especially one at the beginning of a tune to make space for improvisation



resources

Websites

Christian McBride
christianmcbride.com/bio

NPR | Christian McBride
npr.org/people/354658424/christian-mcbride

Wikipedia | Christian McBride
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Videos

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NPR | Christian McBride finds the groove again in his latest album, *Prime*
npr.org/sections/world-cafe/2023/08/01/1191256792/christian-mcbride-new-jawn-album-prime

Christian McBride – “September in the Rain”
youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=9Qmzw6wFZzU

Interview with Jazz Great Christian McBride
youtube.com/watch?v=E3dYFpsDcc4

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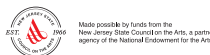
the arts in your school

In-School Residencies: NJPAC teaching artists come right to your school to teach the performing arts to your students. Our super-flexible in-person residencies are designed to meet your needs and you'll have a dedicated program manager to help you every step of the way. It's the perfect program to keep your students creating, connecting and expressing themselves through the magic of the arts.

Professional Development: Calling all educators! Expand your teaching skills, deepen your curriculum and give yourself a creative boost in NJPAC's forward-thinking professional development workshops. Our virtual PD programs are for teachers all the way from pre-K to high school and include hip hop, dance, storytelling, theater, music and more. Not only will you learn something... you'll also have fun and be inspired.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please email our education sales team at artseducation@njpac.org. Or visit njpac.org/education

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