

Roy Haynes' Birds of a Feather

A Tribute to Charlie Parker

Saturday, April 26, 2003, 8 pm
Zellerbach Hall

Roy Haynes, drums
Kenny Garrett, alto saxophone
Dave Kikoski, piano
Christian McBride, bass
Nicholas Payton, horn

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Birds of a Feather:

A Tribute to Charlie Parker

Who better to pay homage to the legendary alto saxophonist Charlie Parker than drummer Roy Haynes, who played with "Bird" back in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when Parker and others were creating a radical new jazz style that came to be called bebop. Haynes, along with another great drummer, Max Roach, is one of the few living musicians who played with Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, and a handful of others who revolutionized jazz more than 50 years ago. Leading a band comprised of alto saxophonist Kenny Garrett, horn player Nicholas Payton, bassist Christian McBride, and pianist Dave Kikoski, Haynes is a commanding force. Now 75, the brilliant and versatile drummer does it all—delivering exciting, inventive intros, showing off his renowned brushwork, or keeping time for the band and soloists in his remarkable, energized, original way.

Roy Haynes (drums) has been a working musician since 1942, and has been part of the bands of a "Who's Who" list of jazz innovators across a wide spectrum of improvisation. Born in Boston in 1926, Haynes was keenly interested in jazz from his earliest days. Primarily self-taught, he began to work locally in 1942 with musicians like guitarist Tom Brown, bandleader Sabby Lewis, and alto saxophonist Pete Brown, before getting a call in the summer of 1945 to join legendary bandleader Luis Russell (responsible for much of Louis Armstrong's musical backing from 1929 to 1933) to play for the dancers at New York's legendary Savoy Ballroom. When not traveling with Russell, the young drummer spent much of his time on Manhattan's 52nd Street and uptown at Minton's, the famous incubator of bebop, soaking up the local jazz scene.

Haynes was Lester Young's drummer from 1947 to 1949, worked with Bud Powell and Miles Davis in 1949, became Charlie Parker's drummer of choice from 1949 to 1953, toured the world with Sarah Vaughan from 1954 to 1959, did numerous extended gigs with Thelonious Monk in 1959–60, made eight recordings with Eric Dolphy in 1960–61, worked extensively with Stan Getz from 1961 to 1965, played and recorded with the John Coltrane Quartet from 1963 to 1965, and has intermittently collaborated with Chick Corea since 1968, and with Pat Metheny during the 1990s. He has been an active bandleader since the late 1950s, featuring artists in performance and on recordings like Phineas Newborn, Booker Ervin, Roland Kirk, George Adams, Hannibal Marvin Peterson, Ralph Moore, and Donald Harrison. A perpetual top-three drummer in the Downbeat Readers Poll Awards, he won the Best Drummer honors in 1996.

Within his imaginative arrangements, Haynes stamps his personality on each tune, intuitively designing rhythmic phrases like a great tap dancer. "I structure pieces like riding a horse," he says. "You pull a rein here, you tighten it up here, you loosen it there. I'm still sitting in the driver's seat, so to speak. I let it loose, I let it go, I see where it's going and what it feels like. Sometimes I take it out, sometimes I'll be polite, nice, and let it move and breathe—always in the pocket and with feeling. So the music is tight but loose."

Haynes assesses his restless persona—"I am constantly practicing in my head. In fact, a teacher in school once sent me to the principal because I was drumming with my hands on the desk. My father used to say I was just nervous. I'm always thinking rhythms, drums. When I was very young, I used to practice a lot; not any special thing, just practice. Now I'm like a doctor. When he's operating on you, he's practicing. When I go to my gigs, that's my practice. I may play something that I've never heard before or that you've never heard before. It's all a challenge. I deal with sounds. I'm full of rhythm, man. I feel it. I think summer, winter, fall, spring, hot, cold, fast, and slow—colors. But I don't analyze it. I've been playing professionally over 50 years, and that's the way I do it. I always surprise myself. The worst surprise is when I can't get it to happen. But it usually comes out. If I don't play for a long period, I'm like an animal, a lion or tiger locked in its cage, and when I get out, I try to restrain myself. I don't want to overplay. I like the guys to trade, and I just keep it moving, and spread the rhythm, as Coltrane said. Keep it moving, keep it crisp."

Kenny Garrett (alto saxophone) is one of the most consistently scintillating and inspiring alto/soprano saxophone players performing today. The multi-Grammy nominee brings a muscular yet lyrical eloquence to everything he touches, in concerts featuring such diverse talents as the New Jersey Symphony, Miles Davis, Art Blakey, Sting, and Peter Gabriel.

Born in Detroit, Kenny Garrett was introduced to the saxophone at an early age. Jazz was all around the house, but Detroit also offered ample opportunity to explore soul, gospel, and classical music. College was placed on the back burner when, in 1978, Garrett was offered a slot in the Duke Ellington Orchestra (then under the direction of Duke's son, Mercer). Three years later, Kenny moved to New York and played with The Mel Lewis Orchestra (absorbing the charts of Thad Jones) and the Dannie Richmond Quintet.

Garrett released his first album as a leader, *Introducing Kenny Garrett*, in 1984 on the Criss Cross label, during the years he was also recording with Art Blakey, Freddie Hubbard, and Woody Shaw. Then Miles Davis called in 1986 and the ensuing five-year/four-album association left an indelible imprint on both Kenny's life and career. "Miles' genius was getting the best out of musicians but not controlling them—letting them be free, but also getting what he wanted from them."

Two albums in more of a contemporary jazz vein for Atlantic Records—*Prisoner of Love* and *African Exchange Student*—led to his signing to Warner Bros. in 1992. Thus far, Kenny has recorded the following for the company: *Black Hope* (1992), *Threshold* (1994), *Triology* (1995), *Pursuance: The Music of John Coltrane* (1996), *Songbook* (1997), *Simply Said* (1999), *Happy People* (2002), and *Standard of Language* (2003).

Last year marked Kenny Garrett's tenth anniversary with Warner Bros.—a decade that brought four-star album reviews, more than 100 sideman credits, critical acclaim from *Rolling Stone* magazine, participation in the soundtrack of the film *Love Jones*, and the distinction of dethroning the stalwart Phil Woods from the top of the alto sax category in *Down Beat* Magazine's Readers' Poll.

Throughout a career earmarked by widely praised solo projects, Garrett consistently strives for excellence and refinement in all walks of his life. Whether the matter at hand is a composition or an arrangement, his signature on a voicemail or the uncanny manner in which he manages to not just speak a foreign language but magically find the music within it, Garrett brings passion and refinement to any and all manner of artistic expression.

Dave Kikoski (piano) was born in Milltown, New Jersey, and his first music lessons came from his father, a part-time musician who sat his son at the piano and taught him songs by Count Basie and Duke Ellington as well as the basics of Chopin and Beethoven. "If you start like that, when you're seven or eight, you know what jazz is, it's in you," says Dave. "It's not like I went to Berklee and learned to play jazz." He did attend Boston's Berklee College of Music after graduating from New Brunswick High School, however, where he played in the school jazz band as well as with rock bands whose repertoire ranged from Emerson, Lake and Palmer to Sly and The Family Stone.

Kikoski's fellow Berklee students in the early 1980s included Branford Marsalis, Donald Harrison, Ralph Moore, and Tery Lynn Carrington, as well as his future wife, Cecilia Tenconi, a reed player from Argentina. After Dave graduated in 1984 with a degree in piano performance, the couple stayed in Boston with Kikoski holding a regular gig downstairs at Ryle's. On his breaks, he would check out the bands playing upstairs—including a combo comprised of drummer Roy Haynes, bassist Miroslav Vitous, and guitarist Pat Metheny.

After Dave and Cecilia had spent several months in her native Argentina, Kikoski felt ready to take on Manhattan—still the jazz capitol of the world. But first he contacted drummer Les DeMerle, a friend from Boston, who helped him tap into the wedding/bar mitzvah/club scene in New Jersey and

suburban Long Island. “I’ve got nothing against playing a Led Zeppelin tune on a gig,” says Dave. “The groups on some of those gigs were pretty good—better than on some jazz gigs—and great stuff could be happening even when it was an R&B cover tune at a bar mitzvah.”

Saxophonist Ralph Moore introduced Dave to Roy Haynes in 1986, and Kikoski is still a first-call member of Haynes’ band. Trumpeter Randy Brecker also heard Kikoski, hired him for some gigs, and eventually called him in for a recording date—the pianist’s first. That recording, Brecker’s *In The Idiom* (on Denon) with Joe Henderson, included bassist Ron Carter and drummer Al Foster; the latter were at that time the regular members of Herbie Hancock’s trio. “Herbie’s my favorite piano player ever, my idol. So to play with Herbie’s rhythm section, guys who had played in Miles’ rhythm section, was a real honor.”

A few days later, Kikoski made his second recording as a sideman—Roy Haynes’ *True Or False* (Freelance), a live date recorded in France. That date led to the pianist’s debut recording, on the same French Freelance label. Walter Becker of Steely Dan heard Dave with Randy Brecker’s band during a West Coast tour; he promptly offered to produce Kikoski’s second album, *Persistent Dreams* (Triloka). With his own compositions now in circulation, Kikoski began fielding calls from musicians who wanted him to play on their dates in order to record his tunes. On the Latin-jazz scene, he gigged with bassist Santi Dibriano, recorded with percussionist Guilherme Franco in his group *Pe De Boi*, and is a regular with the quartet of saxophonist David Sanchez. All these influences and more can be heard in the grooves of Dave Kikoski.

“The hardest thing about being a young musician on the jazz scene,” says the artist, “is that there are so many styles of music, jazz and otherwise, that you’re exposed to. The challenge is to use all that in your own way, to personalize all that has come before you and all that is happening around you. To get the music the way you want it, there’s a lot of work involved.”

Christian McBride (bass) has arguably become the most acclaimed acoustic and electric bassist to emerge from the jazz world in the last 10 years. While jazz lies at the root of Christian’s accomplishments, it is his passion for music in a very broad sense that has made him an esteemed bassist, composer, arranger, educator, and bandleader. His passion for musical diversity has led him to work with everyone from Chick Corea to Pat Metheny, from Kathleen Battle to D’Angelo, from Diana Krall to Bruce Hornsby, from Quincy Jones to Sting. Given the bass is the heart and soul of many styles of music, this makes Christian McBride’s versatility that much more impressive.

Christian was born in Philadelphia in 1972, and having two working bassists in the family proved to be a major influence on him. There was his father, Lee Smith, who played bass for everyone from local Philly soul superstars like the Delfonics and Billy Paul, to Cuban conguero Mongo Santamaria. Then there was his great uncle, Howard Cooper, who played bass with members of the jazz avant-garde, including Sun Ra and Khan Jamal. Electric bass was Christian’s first instrument, which he began playing at age nine. Two years later, he took on the acoustic bass. While intensely studying classical music, Christian’s interest and love for jazz also took flight. At the age of 13, he began causing a buzz around the local Philly jazz scene, sitting in with as many local musicians as possible. The following year, at age 14, Christian would meet Wynton Marsalis, who would become a big brother figure and mentor for McBride, outlining a variety of milestones he should strive to achieve in order to enhance his clearly promising career. Marsalis would put the word out on McBride to his fellow colleagues. New York was waiting.

Upon graduating in 1989 from Philadelphia’s fertile High School for the Creative and Performing Arts, McBride was awarded a scholarship to attend the world-renowned Juilliard School in New York City to study

with the legendary bassist Homer Mensch. Interestingly, he was already so good, so versatile, and in-demand, that he never had a chance to settle into his Juilliard studies. Within the first two weeks of the semester, he joined Bobby Watson’s band, *Horizon*. He also started working around New York at clubs such as Bradley’s and the Village Gate with such real hard-core New York stalwarts as John Hicks, Kenny Barron, and Gary Bartz. After one year at Juilliard, McBride made a decision to leave school and 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 legendary trumpeter Freddie Hubbard’s band. When Hubbard’s band was on hiatus, McBride also worked in one of the hottest bands of the early 1990s, *The Benny Green Trio*. McBride’s star was quickly on the rise.

In 1991, the legendary bassist Ray Brown heard McBride, and asked young Christian to join *SuperBass*, a group Brown created for Christian and John Clayton. This truly solidified Christian’s place in the jazz canon. McBride would take full advantage of having Ray Brown as a mentor/father-figure. McBride was also named *Rolling Stone* magazine’s “Hot Jazz Artist” of 1992. The next year, he

truly proved it as a member of guitarist Pat Metheny's "Special Quartet," which included the late, great drum master, Billy Higgins, and a then-up-and-coming saxophonist named Joshua Redman. While recording and touring with Redman the following year, McBride was signed to Verve Records in the summer of 1994, recording his first CD as a leader, *Gettin' To It*—one of the biggest selling jazz records of 1995. The success of this album paved the way for Christian McBride to become a bandleader.

In addition to all of his solo recordings, throughout the last decade, McBride has been featured on over 200 recordings and has toured and/or recorded with artists such as David Sanborn, George Duke, McCoy Tyner, Bobby Hutcherson, Chaka Khan, Joe Henderson, Betty Carter, Abbey Lincoln, Milt Jackson, Peabo Bryson, Ray Brown, Natalie Cole, George Benson, Benny Golson, Johnny Griffin, and Issac Hayes. McBride has graced the big screen playing his bass in director Robert Altman's 1940s period piece, *Kansas City* (1996), as well as its soundtrack recording.

Not content to only play music, McBride continues to challenge himself in other arenas. As a speaker, he participated on a panel for former President Clinton's town hall meeting on "Racism in the Performing Arts." McBride was a part of Stanford University's panel on "Black Performing Arts in Mainstream America." He also took the plunge into cyberspace by hosting a weekly "jazz chat" series of one-on-one interviews for Sonicnet.com. He does numerous workshops and clinics at universities all over the country. In 2000, McBride was named artistic director of the Jazz Aspen Snowmass summer program, and in 2001, he was named artistic director of the University of Richmond's (Virginia) summer jazz program, as well as the Dave Brubeck Institute at the University of the Pacific in Stockton (California).

Nicholas Payton (horn) was born in 1973. His father is a jazz and classical bassist, and his mother is a former opera singer and classical pianist. His father began to teach Nicholas the trumpet when he was four years old, and at nine, Nicholas had the opportunity to play with the Young Tuxedo Brass Band. At 12, he impressed Wynton Marsalis, who was calling Nicholas' father, with his trumpet over the phone. Later, Wynton recommended the young musician to other bandleaders and Payton even joined Wynton's band. Nicholas played in the historic French Quarter and at Mardi Gras parades in New Orleans.

Payton graduated from the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts and studied with Ellis Marsalis as well as with Harold Battiste and Victor Goines at the University of New Orleans. At 16, he played with pianist Marcus Roberts. Clark Terry, Art Blakey, and Carl Allen are other musicians with whom Payton has worked. In 1992, Payton toured in the United States with Marcus Roberts and in Europe with *Jazz Futures II*. In 1991, *Jazz Futures* had united some "young lions" like Roy Hargrove, Carl Allen, and Benny Green.

In 1992, Payton became a member of Elvin Jones' band and, very soon, at the age of 19, became its music director, a position he held until 1994. Payton called these years his first experience with a regular touring band. At the same time, he was also playing and touring with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and appeared with the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band as well as the Newport Jazz Festival All Stars.

Among Payton's recordings are albums with Elvin Jones as a leader and with the New Orleans Collective. In 1994, Payton's Verve debut album, *From This Moment*, was released, with standards and original compositions by Payton. *Gumbo Nouveau* followed in 1996, with its reference to traditional New Orleans music. Payton was part of the film and soundtrack of Robert Altman's *Kansas City* (1996). His live album with the late trumpeter Doc Cheatham, who was over 90 years old when he recorded it, came out in 1997. For "Stardust," they won the Grammy Award for Best Jazz Instrumental Solo in 1997. In 1998, *Payton's Place* with Wynton Marsalis and Roy Hargrove was released. The same year, together with Christian McBride on bass and Mark Whitfield on guitar, Payton recorded the album *Fingerprints*, dedicated to the music of Herbie Hancock. Payton's most recent CDs include *Nick@Night* and *Dear Louis*, dedicated to the music of Louis Armstrong.