

# RUFUS REID

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## Biography

In presenting Rufus Reid with the 2005 Mellon Jazz Living Legacy Award, the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation saluted him as *“an American treasure with the vision to make a difference and turn possibilities into results.”* Fittingly, Reid’s life as a consummate musician, educator and author exemplifies this tribute.

Reid now adds composition to his life work. He participated in the BMI Jazz Composer's Workshop for five years. This empowered him to move more deeply into the composing arena. He won the Charlie Parker Jazz Composition Award for his composition, "Skies Over Emilia." His composition, "Whims of the Blue Bird" is the result of this award's commission. This has led to further commissions. He is writing for string orchestra, jazz ensembles large and small, and double bass ensemble pieces.

Reid received a 2006 Fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts to enable him to continue composing.

Reid received The ASCAP/IAJE Commission for Established Jazz Composers, honoring Billy Strayhorn, which was premiered at the 2007 IAJE Conference in New York City.

The 2006 Sackler Composition Commission Prize was awarded to Reid, allowing him to fulfill a dream he has had to compose a work inspired by sculptures of the artist, Elizabeth Catlett. *“Quiet Pride,”* a four movement work, *“Recognition,” “Glory,” “Mother and Child”* and *“Singing Head”* is written for Jazz Big Band, inspired by four of her sculptures. *“Quiet Pride”* premiered at The University of Connecticut campuses, Storrs and Stamford, March 18-19, 2007, respectively. The life and work of Elizabeth Catlett inspired Rufus to honor her and introduce her to a wider audience.

In 2003 *“Linear Surroundings,”* a composition of four movements written for nonet; *“Shadow Chasing,” “Moods,” “The Peaceful Flame,”* and *“Collage,”* was created with generous support from The Chamber Music America New Works: Creation and Presentation Program Grant, generously Funded by The Doris Duke Foundation.

Two more presentations of *“Linear Surroundings”* by The Rufus Reid Quintet + 4 were been made possible with support from Chamber Music America’s New Works: Encore Program, funded through the generosity of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

*“The Gait Keeper”* is a result of a commission from Cornell University Jazz Ensemble. The title tune of a Rufus Reid Quintet CD is an adaptation of that big band work. Rufus travels throughout the world as guest artist performing workshops and Master Classes and performing his compositions with both small and large ensembles, presenting **“The Music of Rufus Reid,”** in concert.

January 2007 Reid signed with Motéma Records, who will release a CD and DVD package, The Rufus Reid Quintet, **“Live At The Kennedy Center.”**

**The Gait Keeper** (Sunnyside Records) contains several compositions by Rufus. This Quintet CD features a variety of moods and textures, opening with an infectious buoyant melody, called

The Meddler. It also includes a musical tribute to his mentor and friend, the great bassist, Ray Brown. Rufus closes with a majestic bowed solo paying tribute to the great bassist, Sam Jones, with his composition, "Seven Minds." This CD will definitely survive a journey of repeated listening for the jazz enthusiast.

Rufus already had two trio CD's out with Sunnyside: **Perpetual Stroll**, and **Seven Minds; Corridor To The Limits**, a quartet CD that features Harold Land, plus his duo CD with Harold Danko, called **Myrth Song**.

From 1990-2001, Rufus co-led a Quintet with Akira Tana. They released five CD's during their tenure: **Yours and Mine** and **Passing Thoughts** on Concord Records; **Blue Motion**, **Looking Forward**, and **Back To Front** are available on Evidence Music.

Rufus also has four duo CD's. Two collaborates with Michael Moore, released by Double Time Records: **Double Bass Delights** and **Intimacy of the Bass**. Reid and Ron Jackson recorded **Song for Luis** for MasterMix Records. British bassist Peter Ind and Reid recorded **Alone Together** for Wave Records.

CD's are also available from Reid's Web Site.

As an educator, Reid was Director of Jazz Studies and Performance at William Paterson University in Wayne, NJ, for 20 years. While there he spearheaded two residency outreach programs, one at Rosa Parks Fine Arts High School in Paterson, sponsored by the Woodson Foundation, and as Music Director of Jazz For Teens, sponsored by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. He continues his ongoing work teaching with The Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Camps, The Steans Institute for Young Artists at Ravinia, The Stanford Jazz Workshops, The Richard Davis Foundation for Young Bassists.

Reid's book, **The Evolving Bassist**, published since 1974, continues to be recognized as the industry standard as the definitive bass method. January 2000, the book's Millennium Edition was published, combining both of his books, **The Evolving Bassist** and **Evolving Upward**, and adding new material. In December 2003, **The Evolving Bassist DVD** was released. This two and one half hour DVD also offers a mini Concert view featuring Mulgrew Miller and Lewis Nash.

The Evolving Bassist Book and DVD are distributed by Alfred Publishing Company, Inc and are available on Reid's Web Site.

Rufus Reid's major professional career began in Chicago and continues since 1976 in New York City. His extensive jazz background and discography reads literally like the Who's Who in jazz. He has traveled, performed and recorded with many of the great Jazz Masters. He was privileged to share many musical moments with some that have passed on: Gene Ammons, Kenny Dorham, Eddie Harris, Sonny Stitt, Don Byas, Philly Joe Jones, Thad Jones, Mel Lewis, Dexter Gordon, Bill Evans, Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie, Harold Land, J.J. Johnson and Art Farmer.

Rufus continues performing and recording in collaboration with other wonderful musicians, such as Lee Konitz, Jim McNeely, Nancy Wilson, Roni Ben-Hur, Bob Mintzer, George Cables, Billy Hart, Bill Mays, Ed Soph and Marvin Stamm, Bobby Hutcherson, Michele Rosewoman as well as his own group, The Rufus Reid Quintet. He also appears with special trios or duos, and of course, with his "Linear Surroundings" nonet.

Rufus has performed and recorded with Andre Previn, Kathleen Battle and the St. Lukes Chamber Orchestra in 1992. Also in 1992, Rufus had two performances of "Two Faces", a Concerto for Solo Double Bass and Jazz Trio, composed by Benny Golson for Rufus with the Wayne Chamber Orchestra. It was debuted at William Paterson University and had a New York premier in October in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center.

Born on February 10, 1944 in Atlanta, GA., Rufus Reid was raised in Sacramento, California where he played the trumpet through junior high and high school. Upon graduation from Sacramento High School, he entered the United States Air Force as a trumpet player. During that period he began to be seriously interested in the bass. After fulfilling his duties in the military, Rufus had decided he wanted to pursue a career as a professional bassist. He moved to Seattle, Washington, where he began serious study with James Harnett of the Seattle Symphony. He continued his education at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where he studied with Warren Benfield and principal bassist, Joseph Guastefeste, both of the Chicago Symphony. He graduated in 1971 with a Bachelor of Music Degree as a Performance Major on the Double Bass.

The International Society of Bassists presented Rufus with their highest honor, The Distinguished Achievement Award, in 2001. The New Jersey Chapter of the IAJE named him OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR of 1999. The International Association of Jazz Educators awarded Rufus the Humanitarian Award in 1997 BASS PLAYER magazine, awarded Rufus the 1998 Jazz Educator Achievement Award.

Rufus Reid truly continues to be THE EVOLVING BASSIST.

## **What's being said about Rufus Reid!**

### **Bob Blumenthal**

"Rufus Reid is a product of his overall excellence as a musician. Some bassists stand out for the strength of their walking lines, or their fluent technique, or their expertise with the bow, or the musicality of their solo conception. Reid has all of these items covered, and more. As a bassist, he is the total package.

"The same can be said for his stylistic range and his skills as a composer and bandleader. Reid drew attention early in his career through lengthy associations with both Eddie Harris, considered a master of funk, and Dexter Gordon, one of the pioneers of bebop. Yet he has fit in equally well with Stan Getz, the paragon of "cool" jazz, and Henry Threadgill, a giant of avant-guard. The list could go on, of course, because Reid has what seems to be an inborn feeling for all jazz styles. His efforts as a composer and a bandleader display a similar embrace of the wide musical world. There is no single Rufus Reid type of tune, or a typical Rufus Reid band. Each piece, and each performance, is determined by what the musical situation demands.

"His reputation as an educator and the growth of those who have had the chance to study with him suggest a similar excellence. It is clear that Reid does not see his educational efforts as secondary to, or divorced from the performance side of his career. To modify a cliché, Reid has proved that those who can teach superbly can also play superbly.

"At the core of Rufus Reid's skills is a positivism that affects everything he does. While he can be as serious as necessary, he does not sacrifice an underlying optimistic outlook in the present. His career has been all about lifting spirits – those of his fellow musicians, his students and his listeners."

### **Jim McNeely**

"As BMI Workshop's Musical Director, I was thrilled to see Rufus join the class. I already knew he wrote some really interesting songs and had done some big band arranging. But in the workshop, he really absorbed a lot of musical ideas that were in the air. Over the next few years he really blossomed, producing a number of wonderful, extended works. After establishing himself as one of the great bassists in jazz, and after retiring from a successful teaching career, he could have just coasted, but decided to enter the next, challenging phase of his life."

### **Benny Golson**

"His concept is daunting in that he is unafraid of taking chances. His sound is outstanding, one of the first things for which I listen as a performer and composer. He is able to optimize his sound to the delight of many, certainly including me, and is able to play in tune no matter how fast the temp or how wide the intervals entailed in any situation. As a performer and educator, it's not all theory with him. He makes things happen in the here and now in the most effective way possible, enriching each situation."

### **Lee Konitz**

"Rufus has a beautiful feeling for the sound, the tune, plays great solos and one also has the feeling that he's always responding to what is going on around him...one of the great players of his instrument in this long history of improvised music. It is always a pleasure to play with him."

### **John Pattitucci**

"Rufus is a sage – kind, very gifted and wise. He helped me set my priorities about what

it means to be a jazz bassist and my role as a foundational/compositional force in the music. He is eloquent, witty, charming and a great ambassador for the art form. Even if they know nothing about jazz, people are captivated by the natural, engaging way he presents himself and the music.”

**Dr. Billy Taylor**

“Look at who he’s taught, now stars in their own right, and other instrumentalists who’ve benefited from the wealth of information he communicates as second nature. As a leader, he knows just how to pace a program to satisfy an audience and musicians. He reaches out and touches people – his playing is infectious. The fun starts with him on the bandstand and spills over to the audience.”

**Francois Rabbath**

“Rufus has the strength and quality of character to reinvent himself and doesn’t hesitate to deepen his understanding by searching all techniques that might allow him to improve his game, to that I can attest. He is someone full of talent, who unleashes happiness and ‘joie de vivre’ as soon as one hears him play. He has made a noble contribution to jazz.”

**Jamey Aebersold**

“Rufus is never satisfied with the status quo. He looks for new things and new ways to present jazz and is not afraid to lead.”

**Ron Carter**

“Rufus Reid is one of the most honest bassists I know. He plays the instrument with knowledge and respect and is not afraid to acknowledge that history in all of his performances.”

**Rufus Reid**

“I play with confidence beyond my knowledge and skill to live for the surprise of the unknown moment. I try not to bring my own agenda to a new situation, but rather my sound, my expertise adapted to their needs.”

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