

## David Liebman

David Liebman was born in Brooklyn, New York on September 4, 1946. He began classical piano lessons at the age of nine and saxophone by twelve. His interest in jazz was sparked by seeing John Coltrane perform live in New York City clubs such as Birdland, the Village Vanguard and the Half Note. Throughout high school and college, Liebman pursued his jazz interest by studying with Joe Allard, Lennie Tristano and Charles Lloyd. Upon graduation from New York University (with a degree in American History), he began to seriously devote himself to the full time pursuit of being a jazz artist.

In the early 1970s, Liebman took the leading role (as President) in organizing several dozen musicians into a cooperative, Free Life Communication which became an integral part of the fertile New York "loft" jazz scene in the early 1970s and was funded by The New York State Council of the Arts and the Space for Innovative Development. After one year spent with Ten Wheel Drive, one of the early jazz fusion groups, Liebman secured the saxophone/flute position with the group of John Coltrane's drummer, Elvin Jones. Within two years, Liebman reached the zenith of his apprenticeship period when Miles Davis hired him. These years, 1970-74, were filled with tours, recordings and the incredible experience gained by being on the band stand with two masters of jazz. At the same time, Liebman began exploring his own music-first in the Open Sky Trio with Bob Moses and then with pianist Richie Beirach in the group Lookout Farm. This group recorded for the German based ECM label as well as A&M Records while touring the U.S., Canada, India, Japan and Europe. Lookout Farm was awarded the number one position in the category "Group Deserving of Wider Recognition" in the 1976 Downbeat Magazine's International Critics' Poll.

In 1977, Liebman did a world tour with pianist Chick Corea followed up the next year by the formation of the David Liebman Quintet with John Scofield, Kenny Kirkland and Terumasa Hino as featured sidemen. After several world tours and recordings by the quintet over three years, he reunited with Richard Beirach. They began performing and recording as a duo, as well as creating the group Quest in 1981. Beginning with bassist George Mraz and drummer Al Foster, the group solidified when Ron McClure and Billy Hart joined in 1984. Through 1991, Quest recorded seven CDs, toured extensively and did many workshops with students worldwide.

Liebman's present group formed in 1991 includes guitarist Vic Juris, bassist Tony Marino and drummer Marko Marcinko. With these musicians he has pursued an eclectic direction in recording projects that has ranged from jazz standards to Puccini arias, original adaptations from the John Coltrane and Miles Davis repertoires, original compositions in styles ranging from world music to fusion, always maintaining a repertoire that balances the past, present and future.

Over the past decades, Liebman has often been featured with top European jazz artists such as Joachim Kuhn, Daniel Humair, Paolo Fresu, Jon Christensen, Bobo Stenson and in the World View Trio with Austrian drummer Wolfgang Reisinger and French bassist Jean-Paul Celea. His ability to play in so many diverse styles has led to big band and radio orchestra performances with the Brussels Big Band, the WDR and NDR in Germany, the Metropole Orchestra of the Netherlands, the new music group Klangforum from Vienna and most notably, Liebman was the first improviser to perform with the world famous Ensemble Intercontemporain founded by Pierre Boulez in France. On all these occasions, the music is arranged from Liebman's own compositions and improvisations. He has consistently placed among the top finalists in the Downbeat Critics' Poll since 1973 in the Soprano Saxophone category. David Liebman has been featured on several hundred recordings of which he has been the leader or co-leader on over one hundred. Nearly three hundred original compositions have been recorded. His artistic output has ranged from straight ahead classic jazz to chamber music; from fusion to avant garde, with numerous CDs featuring original arrangements of the music of Monk, Miles Davis, Coltrane, Kurt Weill, Alec Wilder, Cole Porter, Jobim and Puccini.

Liebman has published material on a variety of subjects; instructional DVDs, published chamber music and as well over the years he has contributed regularly to various periodicals such as the Saxophone Journal and the International Association of Jazz Educators Journal. He is the author of several milestone books: Self Portrait Of A Jazz Artist, A Chromatic Approach To Jazz Harmony And Melody, Developing A Personal Saxophone Sound and numerous others, several of which have been translated into other languages.

His teaching activities at universities and in clinic settings have taken him literally around the world as a result of his varied musical directions and expertise on several instruments, along with an ability to articulate the intricacies of the jazz language, aesthetic and technique. Over the years, he has regularly received grantees to study with him funded by the NEA (U.S.), the Canadian Arts Council, as well as Arts Councils of numerous European countries. In 1989 he founded the International Association of Schools of Jazz (IASJ), an organization dedicated to networking educators and students from international jazz schools through periodic meetings, exchange programs and newsletters. Liebman presently serves as the Artistic Director of the IASJ. Lieb has scored music for the JazzEx Ballet Company in the Netherlands (early 90's) and Ocean of Light for Katrina and the Tsunami tragedies(2006).

Liebman has received several distinguished awards including two NEA grants for composition and performance; an Honorary Doctorate from the Sibelius Academy of Helsinki; Finland; a Grammy nomination for Best Solo Performance in 1998 and Best Arrangement for Big Band in 2005; induction into the International Association of Jazz Educator's Hall of Fame in 2000; Artist Grant from the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts in 2005; Jazz Journalist Award for Soprano Sax in 2007.

"While others of his 60s generation have fallen off their ambition, Liebman has remained dogged about composition and trying difficult styles...he's a fighter." -- New York Times(Ben Ratliff)

Liebman uses Alexander tenor and soprano reeds, Keilwerth Saxophones tenor and soprano saxophones, AMT wireless microphones, Van Doren tenor saxophone mouthpieces, Tino's Saxophone Necks.

## **Richie Beirach**

Richie Beirach, is renowned as the jazz pianist with the strongest classical inclinations who has investigated several crossovers into European formal music. His inexhaustible creativity as pianist and composer as well as his love for classical music and his innovative chordal vision is reflected in innumerable recordings with some of the greatest musicians in the jazz scene. He has worked and recorded with stars like Freddie Hubbard, Lee Konitz, Chet Baker, John Abercrombie, Jack DeJohnette, Dave Liebman to name a few. He wrote jazz history with some of his compositions of which ELM, EON and HUBRIS are the most known. Beirach sees classical music as being as big an influence in jazz as the standards from the Broadway shows, Hollywood films, and Swing. "Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Liszt - they all improvised during their concerts", says Beirach, "but this ability to improvise in classical music has been lost". John Abercrombie says: 'As an improviser, Richie is one of the most innovative composers of jazz'.

## **RON McCLURE**

Bassist Ron McLure is known as a stellar sideman to a long list of greats from Thelonius Monk and Charles Lloyd to some of the original fusion groups, Blood, Sweat and Tears and the Fourth Way. He has also performed with the Pointer Sisters, Joe Henderson, Paul Bley, Michel Petrucciani, George Russell and Wynton Kelly. As well, Ron has many recordings under his own leadership featuring dozens of original compositions. McLure's versatility and ability to adapt to so many musical environments has placed him very high among musicians in the know. He is a member of the jazz faculty at New York University and has been nominated for a Grammy in the Best Instrumental Arrangement category for a composition written for Blood, Sweat and Tears.

## **BILLY HART**

When one thinks of a drummer, the role that comes to mind is the ensemble member that keeps the time and is the heartbeat for the band. But it is the true masters of the chair that can do all that AND make their instrument an element of the melodic line.

Billy Hart - one of the most established, lyrical and creative drummers in jazz - is one of those true masters. Born and raised in Washington, D.C., Hart landed his first professional gig at the age of 20 with Shirley Horn. That lasted 3 years and established him as a drummer of some repute.

Since then he has played with accomplished talents such as - McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock, Jimmy Smith, Stan Getz, Charlie Rouse, Cecil Taylor and Pharoah Sanders.

Unlike most musicians who continually strive for individual heights, Billy Hart's vision has always involved musical concepts rather than personal goals; he hears the music and the parts not just him playing his part. Evidence of this is his active involvement in cooperative groups, as leader, co-leader and member. He was a co-founder of Coloquim III, an adventurous percussion ensemble, he was a charter member of the Mingus Dynasty and the Jazztet, and he has played with "The Great Friends" and Quest.