

## Biography of Christian Jacob

Born in Lorraine, France, Christian Jacob began playing classical music at age 4 and became immersed in the music of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel, whose harmonic universe was influential on jazz. "I was 9 or 10 when I discovered jazz," Christian reminisces, "and the very first thing that appealed to me was the harmony, the chords". "The first time I heard Oscar Peterson, I kept going to the store to order the part, of course I never received it; later, when I learned it was improvised, I couldn't believe it".

"I've always had perfect pitch, so I was known for hearing anything and knowing the notes. However, my training was not open to improvisation." It was "learn the piece, and then interpret it," he says. "Even at that age they would basically interpret it for you. In retrospect that probably taught me what is the basic musical feel."

Though studying classical music, the young pianist continued to play jazz "as a hobby"; he worked in combos in Lorraine, and began to develop a style. "Dave Brubeck was my first discovery," he has said, "then Oscar Peterson was a different dimension. I could hear his classical technique; his personality was there too. What he says, he means, and you can hear him having so much fun doing it."

After graduating with "First Prize" from the Paris Conservatory Christian took the risk of going to America to study jazz.

"Going to America wasn't something I had planned to do. It would cost a fortune and I didn't speak English. Then one day a friend of mine said that he was going to study at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, and I realized that it was a great opportunity. My friend spoke English and if I could get a scholarship, I believed I could make it work. It was a great plan, but I didn't get a scholarship, and at the last minute my friend couldn't go, so I ended up going alone.

To make matters more difficult I had arranged to arrive two weeks before classes started so that I could work on learning English. It seemed like a good idea, but it never occurred to me that the dormitories would not be open and I would have no place to stay.

Fortunately for me a recruiter for scientology spotted me wandering around, and wanted to teach me all about their religion. He wanted me to really understand what Scientology was, but his books were in English. So every day we sat with a dictionary and Scientology writings and he taught me the meaning of each word making sure that I really got it. So basically I had a full two weeks of English lessons right before classes started."

It was at Berklee that Christian shed a lot of his classical emphasis and concentrated nearly exclusively on jazz, on learning the art of improvisation and on developing his own personal style.

While at Berklee Christian won a number of awards, including the Oscar Peterson Jazz Masters Award, the Great American Jazz Piano Competition and "Downbeat" magazine's distinction as Top Collegiate Jazz Soloist.

After graduating Christian took a teaching position at Berklee, but gave that up when the opportunity came along to tour with Maynard Ferguson.

"Life on the Road with Maynard was one of the greatest learning experiences of my life. We toured eight months out of the year and performed almost every day. It was exhausting, educational, inspirational and most of all it was fun."

Ferguson plucked Christian from the ranks of an early 1990s edition of Ferguson's Big Bop Nouveau band to be the first featured artist in the "Maynard Ferguson Presents" series on Concord Records. He produced Christian's first two trio recordings: "Maynard Ferguson Presents Christian Jacob" and "Time Lines".

After leaving Maynard Ferguson's band Christian quickly began performing and recording with many of today's jazz legends: Flora Purim and Airto Moreira, Randy Brecker, Miroslav Vitous, and Bill Holman to name just a few.

By the mid 1990's Christian teamed up with vocalist Tierney Sutton, drummer Ray Brinker and bassist Trey Henry to record their first CD together, "Introducing Tierney Sutton". The band became known for its sophisticated, refreshing arrangements, and the obvious musical joy they felt when playing together. They developed into a tightly knit group that recorded seven critically acclaimed CDs for Telarc Jazz. "Unsung Heroes", "Blue in Green", "Something Cool", "Dancing in the Dark", "I'm With The Band", "On the Other Side" and "Desire". The latter three were each nominated for a Grammy Award.

In the midst of his success with the Tierney Sutton Band, Christian released his third trio CD, this time on his own independent label WilderJazz. The 2004 release, "Styne & Mine", is a tribute to the music of Jule Styne, and reached #3 in the jazz radio charts. The success of "Styne & Mine" motivated Christian to record "Contradictions" in 2006. The CD pays homage and offers another look at the original compositions of renowned pianist Michel Petrucciani.

Due to these recordings Christian was asked to tour and record in Japan. The resulting CD "Live in Japan" was released in November 2008.

At present Christian Jacob continues to divide his time between his two bands (The Tierney Sutton Band and The Christian Jacob Trio) and arranging and composing for various artists, orchestras and big bands. He continues to grow and transform with each project always striving for something new.

**For the most current news regarding Christian Jacob please visit his website  
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