

## **Donny McCaslin, soprano and tenor saxophones**

Grammy-nominated saxophonist Donny McCaslin has been a staple of the New York jazz scene for the last 15 years. His organic playing style has afforded him to perform with a dizzying array of players, including Steps Ahead, Danilo Perez, and Brian Blade. His third recording as a leader, "The Way Through," was released on Arabesque Records in 2003, on the heels of his 2001 release "Seen From Above." In 2005, his solo work on the Maria Schneider Orchestra's "Concert in the Garden" was nominated for a Grammy in the "best instrumental solo" category.

Donny attended Berklee School of Music in Boston, where he studied with George Garzone, Joe Viola and Billy Pierce. His work eventually caught the ear of longtime Berklee faculty member vibist Gary Burton. Following his graduation, McCaslin toured with Burton for four years and gigged around Boston with his pianist, Makoto Ozone.

After moving to New York in 1991, Donny quickly found work with bassist Eddie Gomez, who referred him to vibist Mike Mainieri. Shortly after, Donny found himself filling the shoes of his teenage idol, Michael Brecker, in Steps Ahead, a gig that he held for over three years.

Donny also began drawing on his interest in Latin music and worked with former Berklee School dorm-mate Perez as well as bassist Santi DeBriano. McCaslin also indulged his love of large groups with Maria Schneider's Jazz Orchestra, the Gil Evans Orchestra, Mingus Big Band, George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band and the Newport Jazz Orchestra.

As an in-demand sideman, Donny has also performed and recorded with Pat Metheny, Billy Hart, Rachel Z, George Gruntz, Luis Bonilla, Hector Martignon, Roberta Piket, the New York Voices, Scott Colley, Dave Binney, and Deanna Witkowski.

## **David Ambrosio, bass**

David Ambrosio has been an in-demand bassist in his native New York since 1988. In 2003 and 2004, under the auspices of the *Jazz Ambassadors*, a US State Department and Kennedy Center sponsored program, David traveled to Russia, Uzbekistan, and Krygyzstan with the Adam Klipple Quartet. As part of his 2004 trip, David recorded with Uzbek and Krygyz folk musicians. In 2001, David traveled to Cuba to with the New York based quartet, Grupo Los Santos. While in Cuba, they performed with various Cuban folkloric music and dance ensembles.

As a sideman in many working New York ensembles, David has toured and recorded with George Schuller's *Circle Wide*, the Deanna Witkowski Quartet, Christophe Schweitzer's *5 SIX 7*, and the Jamie Began Big Band. He has also performed with Kenny Werner, Terry Gibbs, Buddy DeFranco, Ravi Coltrane, Mat Maneri, John Hicks, Vic Juris and George Garzone.

David has performed extensively in the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan; recent festival appearances have included Canada's Montreal and Guelph festivals; New York's JVC and Vision festivals; and France's Nancy Pulsations Festival.

David has a Bachelor of Arts from Manhattan School of Music in Classical Composition and a Master of Arts in Jazz Performance from Queens College.

### **Vince Cherico, drums**

Drummer/percussionist Vince Cherico has been living in New York for more than a decade while developing, performing and touring in a variety of musical settings around the world. Vince tours extensively as part of Jazz at Lincoln Center's Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra and in the Ray Barretto Sextet.

Recently Vince has had the opportunity to perform in the company of James Moody, Kenny Burrell, Israel "Cachao" Lopez, Joe Lovano, Wallace Roney, Steve Turre, Eddie Gomez, Hilton Ruiz, Don Sickler and Michael Weiss. Vince has also toured with the Caribbean Jazz Project, the Paquito D'Rivera Quintet the Dave Samuels Quartet, and the Deanna Witkowski Quartet. In New York, he has performed with the big bands of Chico O'Farrill, Gary Morgan, Howard Williams, Michael Philip Mossman and the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra.

In 1999 Vince was featured with the NDR Big Band in Hamburg, Germany and recently performed with the competition band for the 2000 Thelonious Monk Jazz Instrumental Competition in Washington, DC. Vince has appeared in several European concert films with Ray Barretto as well as on BET Jazz with Warner Brothers jazz artist Gabriela Anders. As an instructor, he is currently on the faculty of the Drummers Collective, Queens College, and the NYU Jazz Studies Program.