

JOHN BEASLEY BIOGRAPHY

PIANIST / COMPOSER / ARRANGER / MUSIC DIRECTOR / PRODUCER / CONDUCTOR / EDUCATOR

Double GRAMMY® winner and 11x nominee | Emmy nominee | Latin Grammy nominee | Steinway artist

John Beasley is a versatile pianist, composer, arranger who began his career in his 20s backing jazz icons Miles Davis and Freddie Hubbard. Since then, Beasley has performed with a wide range of artists, including Dianne Reeves, Christian McBride, John Patitucci, Chaka Khan, Carly Simon, to name a few. He was music director for international tours with Steely Dan, AR Rahman (Slumdog Millionaire) and Queen Latifah and co-MD for Chucho Valdes La Creation tour.

As a recording artist, Beasley has over a dozen albums and has earned 11 GRAMMY nominations. Beasley's solo project, MONK'estra, is a trilogy of albums which has earned six consecutive GRAMMY nominations and a win. As co-producer/arranger and pianist on "Bird Lives", a re-imagination of Charlie Parker's music with Stuttgart's SWR Big Band and strings with Artistic Director, Magnus Lindgren, Beasley earned a 2023 GRAMMY for arrangement of "Scrapple from the Apple" and 3 nominations. He ventured into a Fado-jazz project "Close to Me" with Portuguese singer Maria Mendes writing arrangements and conducting the Metropole Orkest, which earned him a first Latin Grammy nomination. This album also won a Dutch Edison award for "Best Jazz Vocal" album in 2021. Mendes and Beasley followed this success with a new recording "Suadade, Colour of Love" album.

When UNESCO declared April 30 as International Jazz Day in 2011, John Beasley was appointed Music Director for its annual global gala concerts, which are hosted by the Herbie Hancock Jazz Institute. Since 2012, Beasley helmed concerts in Paris, Istanbul, Osaka, St Petersburg, Havana, Washington, DC, Melbourne, New Orleans, New York, Los Angeles and online, which PBS TV have broadcast. The 2016 Jazz at the White House gala hosted by President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama earned Beasley an Emmy nomination for Best Musical Direction (ABC TV).

Beasley's work as a composer-arranger-pianist extends beyond jazz with many credits in TV and film, particularly with 15-time Oscar-nominee film composer Thomas Newman in the upcoming Elemental (Pixar June 2023) and blockbusters 1917, James Bond's Spectre and Skyfall, Finding Dory, He Named Me Malala, Shawshank Redemption. Newman invited John to orchestrate & conduct his big band MONK'estra in Steven Soderbergh's Let them all Talk with Meryl Streep. Beasley started composing for TV at the age of 24 working for Paramount, Disney and other studios on Star Trek: The Next Generation, Cheers, Fame, to name a few. He was handpicked to be Music Director for TV specials and singing competitions, including Sports Illustrated 50 Years of Beautiful, Duets with John Legend, Sing Your Face Off, The Search for the Next Pussycat Girl. In American Idol's 4th season, Beasley was Associate MD ushering Carrie Underwood to victory. He then spent a decade working as Lead Arranger for the American Idol and The Tonight Show with Rickey Minor as MD.

Over the recent five years, Beasley's output has been prodigious whether writing, recording or performing with his MONK'estra big band/Septet/Quartet; managing steady projects with 3 to 5 European big bands a year; and venturing into symphonic jazz after winning JAM Music Lab's international composition competition with his "Simplexity" piece performed by the renowned Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra. In 2021/2022, Chucho Valdes called to ask him to arrange part of his La Creation suite and tour as co-MD and keyboardist. Also, Beasley can be found touring world stages with Dianne Reeves; his jazz-fusion "El Trio" band with Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez and Jose Gola or writing and producing albums for various artists.

As an educator, Beasley is committed to nurturing the next generation of musicians. He conducts master classes at music schools around the world. His bands often are intergenerational. He has been fortunate to write commissions for Los Angeles Philharmonic's Youth Orchestra Los Angeles and Carnegie Hall National

Youth Orchestra.

PHOTOS: <http://johnbeasleymusic.com/gallery/>

WEB + SOCIAL MEDIA

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QUOTES on John Beasley and MONK'estra

“John Beasley, the one-time keyboardist for Freddie Hubbard and Miles Davis, whose playing reflects a variety of generational influences, incorporating the emphatic chordal clusters of Herbie Hancock, the rhythmic quirkiness of Monk and the lush intelligence of Art Tatum into a highly refined personal voice.”
–Los Angeles Times

"Beasley hits us dead center, features rapid-fire surprises, spiky asides and a quirky sense of truthful swing. Beasley's band will leave you rapt. He brings Monk to life once again for modern-minded listeners. –Downbeat 5 stars

“John Beasley's bold refashionings of Thelonious Monk once again hit the jackpot. Beasley's not just breathing new life into Monk's repertoire - he's firing up the big band scene.” –BBC Music Magazine

“Beasley is a very clever arranger who works his charts hard, and this album is continuously surprising. An ingenious interpreter of Monk [Beasley] conducts like Thad Jones.” –JazzTimes

“MONK'estra brought the project thrillingly to life with their razor-sharp ensemble work and rhythmic authenticity... hip-hop merges with swing and sensuous Ellingtonia sits on a sparse contemporary pulse.”
–Financial Times, 4 stars

Beasley's Monk'estra set was a dazzling display of fresh interpretations. The enlightening set closed with vigorous applause from the house.”

–All About Jazz

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