



GUEST ARTIST MASTER CLASS

Kevin Eubanks, jazz guitar

Tuesday, December 3, 2015 - 8:00 p.m.

FREDERICK LOEWE PERFORMANCE HALL

GUITAR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS:

Jacob Bellows, Jose Marcial and Kristopher Sveen

BIOGRAPHY

Kevin Eubanks is a gifted musician and prolific composer. Kevin is also well known as the Music Director of The Tonight Show band, appearing on the show 18 years (1992-2010). In both situations, Kevin has won over audiences with a laid back style and an affability that seems to belie the concentration and focus that have made him both a household word for TV viewers and a consummate guitarist.

Kevin was born into a musical household in Philadelphia, PA. His mother, Vera Eubanks, is a gospel and classical pianist and organist with a Masters Degree in music education. She has taught both privately and in the school system, until her recent retirement. Vera's brother, Ray Bryant, is a journeyman jazz pianist who has recorded and toured with jazz greats such as Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, and Sarah Vaughan not to mention a few hit records of his own. Kevin was thus exposed to world-class music in his formative years, when he began to play the violin. Along with his older brother Robin, an accomplished trombonist and also a professional musician, Kevin played in small groups around his hometown and spent countless hours practicing at home.

After attending Berklee College of Music in Boston, Kevin moved to New York where his career kicked off in earnest. He played with some of the stalwarts of jazz, like Ron Carter, Slide Hampton, Art Blakey, McCoy Tyner, Sam Rivers, and Roy Haynes. In addition to working in other bands, Kevin became the leader of his own quartet and traveled to Jordan, Pakistan, and India on a tour sponsored by the US State Department not to mention the European/Japanese jazz circuit which so many jazz artists frequent. Kevin taught at the Banff School of Fine Arts in Canada, at Rutgers University, and at the Charlie Parker School in Perugia, Italy. His first album as a leader, *Guitarist*, was released on the Elektra label when Kevin was 25. It documented a sophisticated, nuanced voice on the instrument, and was graced by the presence of some peers who

are still with him today: tenor saxophonist Ralph Moore, who was a member of The Tonight Show band, and Robin. Kevin's cousins, the late bassist David Eubanks and the pianist Charles, also appeared on the album, which was so well received that it led to a seven album contract with the GRP label. Those albums, based largely upon Kevin's compositions, gained him a wide audience through extensive radio airplay and showed the range of his skill on both acoustic and electric guitar. Kevin became a full-time bandleader, and traveled the world with his group.

In 1992, Kevin moved to the West Coast to assume the guitar spot on The Tonight Show Band. In 1995, the leader's torch was passed to Eubanks, whose versatility enabled him to write and choose music that satisfied the huge and varied audience for the show. He assumed the role as Leno's sidekick, sometimes participating in skits, and his engaging personality as well as his musicianship drew attention. The position afforded Kevin the opportunity to work with fine musicians from all genres. As a result of living close to LA, Kevin has become involved in writing scores for both TV movies and full-length independent feature films. He loves to do volunteer work for charities and maintains an active relationship with the organization dearest to his heart, The Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.

An advocate for music education, Kevin served as the Artistic Director of the Jazz In The Classroom Program for The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz from 2010-2012, where he worked with young up-and-coming middle and high school musicians in the Los Angeles public schools. "Young people need to be able to express themselves in ways that educate, uplift, and inspire self-confidence," Eubanks remarked. "It's important that everyone in the neighborhood gets to see that." He also hosted the 2013 NEA Foundation Gala, and has taught at the Louis Armstrong Jazz Camp. Kevin has also been awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Berklee College of Music.

In November, 2010, Kevin released the CD *Zen Food* (Mack Avenue Records) that debuted in the Top Five on the Billboard Jazz Chart and was Kevin's fastest selling record ever. In February, 2013 his CD *The Messenger* (Mack Avenue Records) was released, garnering a 2014 NAACP Image Award nomination for "Outstanding Jazz Album." The same year, he toured extensively as a member of Dave Holland's PRISM, with Eric Harland and Craig Taborn, with their debut album *Prism*, released in September, 2013. His most recent CD, the acclaimed *Duets* (Mack Avenue Records), with fellow guitarist Stanley Jordan, was released in March 2015, to rave reviews from around the world.

As one of the most accomplished guitarists of his or any generation, Eubanks has deservedly become known to millions through music, TV, and what so many artists know so well, "lots of hard work."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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