

African American Classical Music

PURE JAZZ

SPOTLIGHT - NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2020



SPOTLIGHT
on
Reggie Woods

**SPOTLIGHT
NEWSLETTER**
Number 5

Founder
Jo Ann Cheatham

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Agneta Brewster-Ballesteros

-Editor in Chief-
D. Milroy

-Contributing Writers-

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D. Milroy

-Graphic Design-
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This magazine was made possible with funds from The L&J Brewster Foundation, AKR Foundation and from private donors who love culture and the arts.

With The Music In Mind

Welcome "Jazz it Up Readers",

We appreciate that this issue of SPOTLIGHT features performer Reggie Woods. He took a few minutes out of his schedule to sit down with PURE JAZZ and bring us up-to-date. PURE JAZZ is always seeking the eclectic music professional we can shine a SPOTLIGHT on. With Reggie Woods his expansion in the international music marketplace was of keen interest.

We have long sought Mr. Woods and are ecstatic we could feature him in this issue.

Again, we thank you Woods...

Peace,
D. Milroy

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TIME OUT WITH:

Reggie Woods

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Reggie Woods and the Soul Street Band

In America, especially during the 30s through the 50s, and 60s, Afro-American families established a tradition of playing JAZZ music at home. The music is part of our cultural foundation that can be traced directly from the Motherland. This cultural highway had a long-lasting impact in our community's lives. It is the same cultural highway that creates some of the world's fantastic musicians

In that travel spirit **PURE JAZZ** discovered Reggie Woods. He is known not only in the Jazz world, but other genres as well and this caught our collective eye. A master saxophonist, arranger, composer, educator, and chief executive officer of Woody Woods Workin' Music. His sound is fully based in the JAZZ genre, from that core he's translated Jazz expertise into his

own melodic sweet sound on alto, tenor, and soprano sax. These tones satisfies listeners and created an audience in the USA and Europe. Despite Jazz being his first love, Reggie's creative and imaginative enough to embrace Rap, Pop, Blues, Funk and Latin Jazz genres. This jazzman's history, and accomplishments bring to light an artist of unique ability but blessed with his own interpretive voice. This defies the "he sounds like" syndrome that can affect some music lovers.

Reggie recently spoke with **PURE JAZZ** about his craft, and what he's doing now moving forward in this new era of the music business. We realized this multi-instrumentalist was a talented artist with a unique story to tell. Despite his impressive list of ac-

accomplishments and performances with various artists internationally his focus now is expanding his solo artistic endeavors.

Reggie's taken on numerous types of music projects and performances in different genres. From individuals to corporations he created music programs for his diverse client list. Show biz concerts include Stevie Wonder in Hawaii at Kona Island, the Sheraton Hotel in New York City for President Bill Clinton's Global Initiative Program and opening for vocalist Tony Bennett. Reggie's Soul Street Band also appeared on Oprah Winfrey's "Shalom in the House-Lavish Spending," and the Today Show Wedding Series. With performances like this under his belt Reggie Woods humbly describes himself ready for the next step in his solo career.

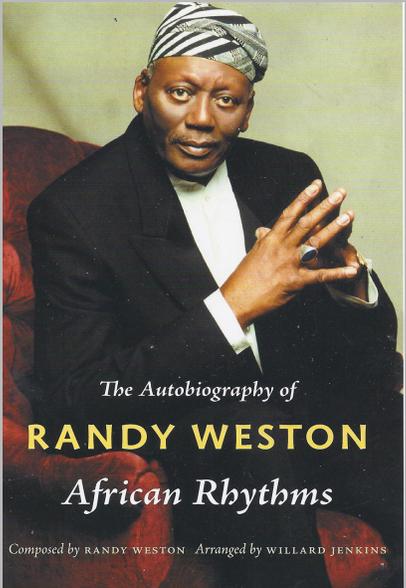
To have a career with an impact like Reggie Woods it must be based on something. His story is historically familiar. During the 50's his parents, from two different cities in South Carolina, met, married, headed north, and brought their music with them. A hard-working couple, his father aspired to be a musician, while his mother taught herself how to play the piano. During the Jim Crow era Black families like Reggie's held tight to the music, "It was our motivation and survival mechanism," always has been".

Reggie came into the world at the formerly named Queens Gen-

eral Hospital and grew up in the "40 Projects" in South Jamaica, Queens NY. Shortly afterward the family moved from the projects into their own home (a distinctive honor in those days and the basis of financial stability). They began to establish business ventures and expanded when the Woods' Sr. purchased a barber shop near Liberation Rock on Farmer's Boulevard.

The family grew to become well known in the area. Home, of course, was 'de' place where tunes always flowed, and according to Reggie: "*The place to be to hear great icons, play bid whisk, plus great Jazz was heard all of the time.*" Ultimately, love for the saxophone emerged from repeated extensive listening sessions of his dad's record collection at the home base in Jamaica, Queens. It was this experience where his young ears absorbed musical stories of our collective past. It was also here where his love for the saxophone began.

PURE JAZZ was pleasantly surprised to discover where Woods gained the experience needed to be a professional on his instrument. Reggie revealed it began at a local neighborhood fixture, "Carmichael's" Restaurant." A family owned business on the corner of Foch Boulevard today known as Guy R. Brewer Blvd. The real neighborhood Jazz heads knew about the club Wednesday's in the basement of the restaurant. "I



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I have come from France more firmly convinced than ever that Negroes should write Negro music. We have our own racial feeling and if we try to copy whites we will make bad copies...We won France by playing music which was ours and not a pale imitation of others, and if we are to develop in America we must develop along our own lines.

— James Reese Europe —

AZ QUOTES

James Reese Europe

learned to play sax in the sessions each week jamming with the likes of Roy Eldredge, Richard Williams and Walter Perkins to name a few.” Also, Carmichael’s was where Reggie met Jazz Promoter Hilly Sanders. Woods credits him for encouraging the young saxophonist to seek the skills required to have a successful career.

During this time, Reggie was among a group of young Black students from Ozone Park bussed to Elizabeth Blackwell Junior High School in Howard Beach. Howard Beach is infamous, it’s a predominantly white neighborhood where a mob of young whites chased the late Michael Griffith to his death in the 80s. Although this incident took place after Woods was long gone, Woods recalled the time period by simply stating: “I’m a native New Yorker who had to fight every day.”

PURE JAZZ asked Reggie who was his (MVP) most valuable player in the field?

His reply; Jazz icon Dexter Gordon.

Reggie’s admiration for a Jazz icon brought out something deep from inside. Enough to encourage Reggie to seek Mr. Gordon out for an up close and personal view of the man. *“There’s so many ...of course I admired John Coltrane, but never got a chance to see him play. I did get to see Dexter Gordon play many times.”*

Reggie admired Mr. Gordon’s style, and after watching him



*Reggie Woods and
Master Musician Billy Joel*

in several NYC clubs they met. *“I hung out with him a couple of times... tried to get him to give me some lessons... He was in his 70s I guess, and he was struggling a bit in those days. It wasn’t easy getting through to him.”* Reggie was describing one of the building blocks experiences of a creative music career.

Another building block experience: As a saxophonist Woods recorded with Muse Records. However, Muse went out of business soon after. Atlantic Records where Woods also did some work, the Jazz department dismantled, so earlier albums Reggie recorded there were never released. Woods plans to change that as he’s recording new music. He intends to release his next project on the Internet on all the various platforms, including streaming, and perhaps his own audio channel. In the “information” age anything is possible.

Experiences such as this help create a sound for his music and a format for his business where he minimized the chances of things like that to happen again. By taking on numerous types of music projects and performances in different genres Reggie expanded his popularity. His bands played all over the world entertaining audiences causing him to coin himself the “Music Broker” because he provides productions “across the board.” He services special private parties for individuals, and corporations alike.

Reggie, and his band gave a concert for King Hussein, as well as opening for Elton John in St. Petersburg in early 2000s. Reggie Woods is not a novice when it comes to European performances.

Reggie Woods humbly describes himself, *‘I’m not big, I’m up, and coming. I’ve played with jazz artists, but now it’s what to focus on.’*

As Reggie continues to build his own brand, the one consistent aim is he retains the passion to provide musical alternatives for at risk youth. This priority endures. He continues to harvest new ideas for creating non-profit outreach music projects to help others. Reggie received a significant boost when he was bestowed a **National Endowment's** grant that enabled him, and his group to perform for seniors through his community outreach by creating special Jazz events. The grant also afforded him the opportunity to take his skills to Rikers Island for three years creating a music program for the prison. In other outreach programs, such as one he developed at P.S. 284 in Brownsville, Woods taught students how to play instruments as well as perform. As he exposes youngsters to this art, he shares his story writing compositions based on his 'voyage,' encouraging students to seek a positive path.

Reggie's aim now is building his solo career and music composition library. If you're into a unique jazz musician check him out when he's in Europe or in the States. Based in Brooklyn, New York Mr. Woods brings to light slick sounds of a smooth saxophone player of unique ability. Reggie has exhibited a superior interpretive sound that's touched international audiences as he expands to reach new heights. Saxophonist, Band Leader and Impresario, his level of expertise can only be demonstrated by one who's experienced the jour-

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Reggie Woods

Quintet

Reggie Woods
saxophonist
Riley Mullins
trumpeter
Anthony Wonsej
pianist
Lonnie Plaxico
bassist
Cedric Easton
drummer

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Reggie Woods performing with the "FatBack Band"

ney. There's still lots more to Mr. Woods so please visit his website for those details do to size constraints we couldn't include here.

"Keep Swingin' baby"
--Reggie Woods

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Reggie Woods

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*Patricia A. Kelly is a
freelance writer. She is
currently editing a book
about Gil Scott Heron...*



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This edition of "Space Is The Place" takes a look at two of the world renowned bass performers who are at the top of their game. Make sure to surf the links to the destinations where they can be seen performing on the web.



Visit Ms. Spalding on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/EsperanzaSpalding)
www.esperanzaspalding.com
www.npr.org/artists/esperanza-spalding
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Esperanza Emily Spalding (born October 18, 1984) is an American Jazz bassist, cellist and singer, who draw upon many genres in her own compositions. Spalding was raised in Portland, Oregon and was a musical prodigy, playing violin in the Chamber Music Society of Oregon at age five. She was later both self-taught and trained on a number of instruments, including guitar and bass. Her proficiency earned her scholarships to Portland State University and the Berklee College of Music. What make this album so compelling is how many different formats the music is available in. Additionally Ms. Spalding is marketing her materials as an independent performer reaching out through social media as well as an excellent website. Finding her music is very easy.

Ms. Spalding has won four Grammy Awards, including the Grammy Award for Best New Artist at the 53rd Grammy Awards, making her the first Jazz artist to win the award. As Space is the Place is now on line we can upgrade our artists with direct links on the web to more information about the artists we bring to your attention here. Various viewpoints describing her music makes for interesting reading.

Ms. Spalding new recording, Emily's D+Evolution is more than a recording project; it's an awakening of her inner child. It's an audio portrait stretching Spalding beyond music and into storytelling through acting, staging, and movement."--Amy Poehler's Smart Girls. Follow the links below to peruse Esperanza Spaulding's musical career.

Christian Lee McBride (born May 31, 1972) is an American Jazz bassist. He is considered a virtuoso, and is one of the most recorded musicians of his generation; he has appeared on more than 300 recordings as a sideman. He is also a five-time Grammy award winner. PJM staff members noticed Mr. McBride performing at the White House, on NPR, at Lincoln Center and on tour with almost everybody. In the staff meeting it all came together to include Christian in this section. We've had a contact resulting in a conversation on [World of Jazz](#) Radio.

The ground he is moving with his music put Christian McBride leading the charge for a new generation of performers the Jazz community needs to know about. Follow the links to learn more about this talented musician.



Watch Mr. McBride in action [here](#):