

## CHARLES LLOYD - Biography

“Charles Lloyd is an international treasure.” *Carlos Santana*

“Follow the career of Charles Lloyd, and you see a map of great jazz across half a century. His band now with pianist Jason Moran, bassist Reuben Rogers and drummer Eric Harland is at a high, and his shows full of momentum and intuition, perfectly represent the idea that the best jazz needs to be experienced live.” *Ben Ratliff, The New York Times*

“He's expansive in his musical discourse yet without a wasted note.” *Wall Street Journal*

“Jazz improvisation as complex and far-reaching as the Lloyd Quartet had to offer can be a daunting listening experience. ... The listener is taken on a journey through gravity-less improvisational space. To the credit of Lloyd and his players, that journey was illuminated by one musical enlightenment after another.” *Los Angeles Times*

“The rediscovery of Charles Lloyd is one of the best things to happen to jazz in more than a decade. He is humble and peaceful, yet he experiments without fear. Once again successful and appreciated by the jazz world, he outshines some of the most noted players on today's scene. His music is a balm to ears grown weary of jazz that is derivative, exclusionary or a passing fad.” *Seattle Post Intelligencer*

“Charles Lloyd is one of the greatest saxophonists on the planet, never afraid of experiment, but never out of touch with his audience.” *BBC Radio 3*

“There has not been a saxist whose work is this spiritual since John Coltrane and Albert Ayler.” *The Boston Globe*

“Charles Lloyd invents pearls in the night. In a concert of 2 1/2 hours, it was a rare moment that joins the list of unforgettable concerts in the anthology of the Marciac Festival; equal to the concerts of Stan Getz and Sonny Rollins.” *Le Monde*

“He's the Master, we want him back soon.” *TimeOut / London*

“As his career nears its sixth decade, Lloyd proves to be a musician of unending drive and enthusiasm who seemingly never tires or reaches contentment. His playing on both saxophone and flute are cleaner, more elegant and filled with more surprises than ever before.” *Jazz.com*

“Lloyd is still making music at a very high level, while breaking new ground with musicians half his age.” *Allaboutjazz*

Charles Lloyd's musicality, generosity, and intuitive gifts as a communicator have enabled him to fill a special role in jazz: to make extremities of creative liberation accessible. And he is still at it. He plays with more strength and passion today than when he was 26. *Stereophile*

The critical consensus is that Charles Lloyd has never sounded better. The depth of his expression reflects a lifetime of experience. Lloyd has a legendary history in the music world, and could certainly be in a position to slow down and rest on his laurels. But looking back has never been of great interest to this tender warrior; this seeker of beauty and truth. “Go forward,” is his motto, as he keeps shifting to a higher, well calibrated gear.

It is well known that Lloyd has an ear for extraordinary pianists; and pianist, Jason Moran is nothing short of extraordinary - the same is true for drummer, Eric Harland and bassist, Reuben Rogers. Together with Lloyd, the expression of each individual becomes part of a greater whole. “*Charles Lloyd's approach to performance is quite different. The more Lloyd goes inside himself the more he draws his audience in. With Jason Moran on piano, Eric Harland on drums, and Reuben Rogers on bass, Lloyd once again has a group able to follow his excursions into the music and into the mystic. Lloyd is one of the greats, rather like Joan Miro in modern art, he has no peer save himself. Music of total transport and delight.*” *Duncan Heining, Jazzwise*

2010 has been a watershed year for Lloyd – April was highlighted with a deeply moving concert in Cape Town, South Africa; May by concerts in Melbourne, Australia with the New Quartet and Sangam (Zakir Hussain and Eric Harland). And, in June, Lloyd established another “first” in his interesting history of jazz “firsts”, by collaborating with the classical Greek singer, Maria Farantouri for a concert at the Herodion Theater at the foot of the Acropolis. *Ta Nea*, the leading newspaper of Athens stated “*Music has no borders.... The audience was filled with a Dionysian ecstasy. While the music had reminiscences of a Hypiros fair, at the same time it took you to the heart of New York City.*” Later this year he will mix the live recording of the Herodion concert for a future release on ECM.

*Mirror*, his second recording with the New Quartet, (September 2010) has already been called a “Charles Lloyd classic.” *Rabo de Nube*, also on ECM, captured the quartet “live” at its inception, and was voted #1 recording for the 2008 Jazz Times Reader's and Critic's Poll. His concerts and recordings are events of pristine beauty and elegance, full of intensely felt emotion and passion that touches deep inside the heart.. This is not entertainment, but the powerful uncorrupted expression of beauty through music. When music vibrates, the soul vibrates and touches the spirit within.

- Credited by many musicians with anticipating the World Music movement by incorporating cadences of many cultures in his compositions as early as the late 1950s, Charles Lloyd describes his music as having always “danced on many shores.” As Peter Watrous wrote in *The New York Times*, “*Mr. Lloyd has come up with a strange and beautiful distillation of the American experience, part abandoned and wild, part immensely controlled and*

*sophisticated."*

- From the moment he first came to prominence as the young music director of the Chico Hamilton Quintet in 1960, Lloyd began to take audiences on journeys that traversed enormous distances. Over nearly five decades, his compositions have punctuated the post-bop period, embraced the traditional music of a host of world cultures and ciphered the psychedelic 1960s with avant-garde improvisation.
- Lloyd was one of the first jazz artists to sell a million copies of a recording 'Forest Flower', and then he surprised the music world by walking away from performing just at the point that he was dubbed a jazz superstar. Actually he was just following a trajectory that was taking him closer to the essence of the music he was hearing.
- At the peak of the Cold War in 1967, Lloyd made headlines when his Quartet became the first jazz group from the U.S. to play in the USSR by invitation of the Soviet people rather than through government sponsorship. Its first stop was Tallinn and subsequent concerts took place in Leningrad and Moscow.
- The Charles Lloyd Quartet was the first jazz group to perform at the legendary Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco. The acoustic group fused virtuoso improvising with a constantly changing combination of musical tropes, incorporating the challenge of avant-garde or "free jazz" with elements of non-Western music, impressionistic harmonies and occasional rock rhythms in open-ended musical flights that echoed the free spirit of the psychedelic 1960s. Electric jazz/rock germinated in a series of original performances that, ironically, were acoustic. He was invited to guest on recordings with the Doors, the Birds, The Grateful Dead, Ashish and Pranesh Khan, and the Beach Boys. Miles Davis and other jazz figures were highly influenced by Lloyd's explorations and soon plugged in to play to the young fans that Lloyd had reached through his acoustic outings.
- He was the first jazz musician to perform at the classical music festival in Bergen, Norway.

Charles Lloyd was born in Memphis, Tennessee, on March 15, 1938. Like New Orleans, 400 miles to the south on the Mississippi, Memphis has a rich river culture and musical heritage saturated in blues, gospel and jazz. Lloyd's ancestry of African, Cherokee, Mongolian, and Irish reflects a similar rich culture. He was given his first saxophone at the age of 9, riveted to 1940's radio broadcasts by Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Billie Holiday and Duke Ellington. His early teachers included pianist Phineas Newborn and saxophonist Irvin Reason. His closest childhood friend was the great trumpeter Booker Little. As a teenager Lloyd played jazz with saxophonist George Coleman and was a sideman for blues greats Johnny Ace, Bobby Blue Bland, Howlin' Wolf and B.B. King.

Classical music also exerted a strong pull on the young Lloyd. In 1956 he left Memphis for Los Angeles to earn his Master's in music at USC where he studied with Halsey Stevens, a foremost Bartok authority. While his days were spent in academia, Lloyd spent nights getting educated on the job in L.A.'s jazz clubs, playing with Ornette Coleman, Billy Higgins, Scott La Faro, Don Cherry, Charlie Haden, Eric Dolphy, Bobby Hutcherson and other leading west coast jazz artists. He also was a member of the Gerald Wilson big band.

In 1960 Lloyd was invited to become music director of Chico Hamilton's group when Dolphy left to join Charles Mingus's band. The Hungarian guitarist Gabor Szabo and bassist Albert "Sparky" Stinson soon joined Lloyd in the band. Hamilton's most memorable albums for Impulse Records, *Passin' Thru* and *Man from Two Worlds*, featured music arranged and written almost entirely by Lloyd, and during this period of prolific composing he was also finding his unique voice as a saxophonist. A memorable collaboration took place between Lloyd and the Nigerian master drummer Babatunde Olatunji, with whom the saxophonist played when he wasn't on the road with Hamilton.

Lloyd joined the Cannonball Adderley Sextet in 1964, and performed alongside Nat Adderley, Joe Zawinul, Sam Jones and Louis Hayes. He remained with Cannonball for two years, and to this day continues to acknowledge the important role Cannon played in his own development as a leader.

In 1964 Lloyd signed with CBS Records and began to record as a leader. His Columbia recordings, *Discovery*, (1964) and *Of Course, Of Course*, (1965) featured sidemen including Roy Haynes and Tony Williams on drums, Richard Davis and Ron Carter on bass, Gabor Szabo on guitar and Don Friedman on piano, and led to his being voted Downbeat Magazine's "New Star." *Of Course, Of Course* was reissued on Mosaic Records in 2006.

Lloyd left Cannonball Adderley in 1965 to form his own quartet, a brilliant ensemble that introduced the jazz world to the talents of pianist Keith Jarrett, drummer Jack DeJohnette and bassist Cecil McBee. Their first release together was a studio recording, *Dream Weaver*, followed by *Forest Flower: Live at Monterey*, (1966). *Forest Flower* made history as one of the first jazz recordings to sell a million copies, and the album's firsts continued as it became a stunning crossover success that appealed to a popular mass market audiences and gained heavy airplay on FM radio. The Quartet was the first jazz group to appear at the famed Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco and other rock palaces and shared billing with Jimi Hendrix, Janis

Joplin, Cream, the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane.

In 1967 Charles Lloyd was voted "Jazz Artist of the Year" by Down Beat, and the Quartet was invited to tour the world. The Lloyd quartet found a warm reception in Europe at the new jazz festivals in Montreux, Antibes, Molde. Its performances in the Far East, the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc nations of Europe often marked the first time these audiences had heard an American jazz group live.

And then, at the height of his career in the early 1970s, Lloyd disbanded the quartet and dropped from sight, withdrawing to pursue an inner journey in Big Sur, the wild haven that had previously attracted other artists and seekers including Robinson Jeffers, Langston Hughes, Henry Miller, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Jack Kerouac, Jean Varda and Jamie DeAngulo.

It wasn't until 1981 that Lloyd moved to break a decade of silence in the jazz world when a remarkable 18-year-old French pianist, Michel Petrucciani, arrived in Big Sur. Lloyd was compelled to help introduce this gifted artist to the world. This led to U.S., European and Japanese tours in 1982 and 1983 with Petrucciani on piano, Palle Danielsson on bass and drummer Son Ship Theus. British jazz critic Brian Case called Lloyd's return "one of the events of the 1980s." The group produced a special edition cassette, *Night Blooming Jasmine*, and two live records, *Montreux '82* and *A Night in Copenhagen*, which also features Bobby McFerrin (reissued by Blue Note Records). Satisfied that Petrucciani was beginning to receive the recognition he deserved, Lloyd again retreated to Big Sur.

In 1986, after being hospitalized with a nearly fatal medical condition, Lloyd rededicated himself to music. When he regained his strength in 1988 he formed a new quartet with the renowned Swedish pianist Bobo Stenson. When Lloyd returned to the Montreux Festival in 1988, Swiss critic Yvan Ischer wrote: *"To see and hear Charles Lloyd in concert is always an event, not only because this saxophonist has been at quite a few crossroads, but also because he seems to hold an impalpable truth which makes him a thoroughly original musician...This is what we call grace."*

Lloyd made his first recording for ECM Records, *Fish Out of Water* in 1989. The project marked the beginning of a new wave of Lloyd compositions and recordings. ECM's producer, Manfred Eicher, compared the recording to a Giacometti painting, saying, *"I really believe this is the refined essence of what music should be. All the meat is gone, only the bones remain."* More than twenty years later, he is still with the label, and still in search of the "sound" and the truth.

Charles Lloyd maintains an active performance and recording schedule with the New Quartet and Sangam. He has been writing an opera about the life and trial of his grandfather, Ben Ingram, and collaborates with poets Charles Simic, Michael McClure, and Kamau Daaood.

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## Charles Lloyd - ECM Discography

### **Fish Out of Water 1990**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone, flute

Bobo Stenson: piano

Palle Danielsson: double bass

Jon Christensen: drums

### **Notes From Big Sur 1991**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone

Bobo Stenson: piano

Anders Jormin: double bass

Ralph Peterson: drums

**The Call (1993) All My Relations, (1995) Canto (1997)**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone  
Bobo Stenson: piano  
Anders Jormin: double bass  
Billy Hart: drums

**Voice in the Night 1998**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone  
John Abercrombie: guitar  
Dave Holland: double - bass  
Billy Higgins: drums, percussion

**The Water is Wide 2000**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone  
John Abercrombie: guitar  
Brad Mehldau: piano  
Larry Grenadier: double bass  
Billy Higgins: drums

**Hyperion With Higgins 2001**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone taragato  
John Abercrombie: guitar  
Brad Mehldau: piano  
Larry Grenadier: double bass  
Billy Higgins: drums

**Lift Every Voice 2002**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone, alto flute, taragato  
Geri Allen: piano  
John Abercrombie: guitar  
Marc Johnson: double bass  
Larry Grenadier: double bass  
Billy Hart: drums

**Which Way Is East 2004**

Charles Lloyd: tenor and alto saxophones, C and alto flutes, taragato, Tibetan oboe, maracas, voice  
Billy Higgins: drums, guimbri, Guinean and Senegalese hand drums, Guitar, voice

**Jumping the Creek 2005**

Charles Lloyd: tenor and alto saxophone, tarogato  
Geri Allen: piano  
Robert Hurst: double bass  
Eric Harland: drums

**Sangam 2006**

Charles Lloyd: tenor and alto saxophone, alto and bass flute, tarogato, piano  
Zakir Hussain: tablas, percussion, voice  
Eric Harland: drums, percussion, piano

**Rabo de Nube 2008**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone, alto flute, tarogato,  
Jason Moran, piano  
Reuben Rogers, double bass  
Eric Harland: drums, percussion, piano

**Mirror 2010**

Charles Lloyd: tenor & alto saxophones, voice  
Jason Moran, piano  
Reuben Rogers, double bass  
Eric Harland: drums, percussion, voice