

Gerald Clayton Biography



At 27 years old and having released his second album *Bond: The Paris Sessions* (Decca/Emarcy), Gerald Clayton has achieved several milestones. With two Grammy® nominations already, and having recently received a third nomination for *Bond* as 'Best Instrumental Jazz Album of the Year, Gerald is no stranger to recognition and acclaim.

A 2010 Downbeat Magazine's Critic's Poll Rising Star, Gerald has been honing his craft steadily since high school. With the release of *Two-Shade* in 2009, Gerald began his ascent as a leader in the jazz world. Combining the age-old sounds of jazz melody with modern takes on old favorites as well as inspired original compositions, Gerald makes his mark once again with *Bond*.

"Tradition and innovation can peacefully coexist," says Gerald. And exist they do with pieces crafted not only by Gerald, but also by his father, Grammy®-winning bassist John Clayton as well as Gerald's band mates bassist Joe Sanders and drummer Justin Brown.

Bond is more than a merging of musical styles- it is a fusion of young and old, combining time-honored melodies with hip rhythms... *the new sound of jazz*. Gerald's own trio provides him with the vehicle to explore and expand on his own vision of the music. He has been praised for presenting a "deconstructivist aesthetic" with "a stronghold on the swing factor".

The album was recorded in Paris at Studio de Meudon, and engineered by Grammy®-winner Joel Moss. "I'm very excited to share this project with everyone, as it exhibits a new level of chemistry that has developed between the three of us. Since each of the

compositions is dedicated to various personal bonds in my life, listening back conjures up specific memories and emotions for me. I hope the listener will enjoy the musical conversations taking place as much as I value the opportunity to bond with the trio.” says Gerald.

His dynamic and award-winning sound has been praised in print many times over by publications such as the Jazz Times and the Los Angeles Times. The New York Times has saluted his “huge, authoritative presence” and Down Beat Magazine’s 2008 Readers’ Poll named him one of the top up-and-coming pianists to watch. As a composer, his work has been commissioned by the Jazz Gallery in New York City and performed overseas with the BBC Orchestra. He has been honored with grants from the National Endowment of the Arts and the Western Jazz Presenters Network as well as a Level 1 award by the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts (NFAA), the title “Presidential Scholar in the Arts,” and second place in the Thelonious Monk Institute Jazz Piano Competition. He recently won the Edison Award for best international jazz album as well.

Born in the Netherlands in 1984, Gerald grew up mainly in Los Angeles with a musical family that includes his father, bassist/composer John Clayton, and uncle, saxophonist Jeff Clayton. At the age of six Gerald began eleven years study of classical piano with Linda Buck before enrolling in the Jazz Studies program at the University of Southern California. In college in Los Angeles and a year at the Manhattan School of Music, Gerald studied piano and composition under Shelly Berg, Billy Childs, and Kenny Barron.

Professionally, Gerald has had the honor of performing nationally and internationally with some of the most established names in Jazz such as Lewis Nash, Al Foster, Terrell Stafford and Clark Terry. Duo piano concerts with Gerald have featured artists as celebrated and diverse as Hank Jones, Benny Green, Kenny Barron, Mulgrew Miller and Tamir Hendelman. Gerald also relishes playing with Jazz’s next generation of innovators: Ambrose Akinmusire, Dayna Stephens, Kendrick Scott, Sachal Vasandani and many others.

From 2006-2008, Gerald toured extensively with Roy Hargrove in his quintet, big band, and funk group before breaking out on his own with the Gerald Clayton Trio [featuring Sanders and Brown]. Gerald is still a member of the Clayton Brothers Quintet and also performs not only duos with his dad but also ‘Father, Son, and Godfather’ concerts with longtime Clayton family friend, drummer Jeff Hamilton.

Gerald relishes a method of open-mindedness: “I have listened to lots of different musical styles as long as I can remember. I continue to absorb all these influences and in doing so create my own voice—by combining their forces into a harmonic whole...I seek to blend the various styles and sounds I love into a balanced, tasteful musical language.”

<http://www.geraldclayton.com/>

