



SULLIVAN FORTNER

Pianist, Composer, Educator
www.sullivanfortnermusic.com

“An artist with his own distinct style”

— *The New York Times*

For the past decade, Sullivan Fortner has been stretching deep-rooted talents as a pianist, composer, band leader and uncompromising individualist. The GRAMMY Award-winning artist out of New Orleans received international praise as both key player and producer for his collaborative work on *The Window* (Mack Avenue, 2018), alongside multi-GRAMMY winner, vocalist-composer Cecile McLorin Salvant. As a solo leader, he has released *Moments Preserved* (Decca, 2018) and *Aria* (Impulse!, 2015) to critical acclaim, and he’s only getting started. Now based in New York, Fortner has earned recognition in multiple *DownBeat* Critics Poll categories, winning first place in Rising Star Piano and Rising Star Jazz Artist.

In addition to associations with such diverse voices as Wynton Marsalis, Paul Simon, Diane Reeves, Etienne Charles and John Scofield, Fortner’s frequent and longtime collaborators have included Ambrose Akinmusire, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Stefon Harris, Kassa Overall, Tivon Pennicott, Peter Bernstein, Nicholas Payton, Billy Hart, Gary Bartz, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Fred Hersch and the late Roy Hargrove. Recent collaborations include GRAMMY-nominated releases *Dear Love* (Empress Legacy) and *Generations* from leaders Jazzmeia Horn and The Baylor Project, respectively.

A highly-sought improviser, Fortner has performed across the country and throughout the world at such cultural institutions as Snug Harbor, New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, Sweet Lorraine’s and The Jazz Playhouse in New Orleans, and Jazz at Lincoln Center, Jazz Standard and Smalls Jazz Club in New York City. He’s appeared at celebrated festivals, including Newport, Monterey, Discover, Tri-C and Gillmore Keyboard, among others. In 2019, Fortner brought his band to the historic Village Vanguard for a week-long engagement he would reprise in 2020 as a virtual

performance during lockdown. His notable studio contributions include work on Etienne Charles's *Kaiso* (Culture Shock, 2011), Donald Harrison's *Quantum Leap* (FOMP, 2010), and Theo Croker's *The Fundamentals* (Left Sided Music, 2007).

Playing solo or leading an orchestra, Fortner engages harmony and rhythmic ideas through curiosity and clarity. Within phrases, he finds universes, and listeners often hear how he's moved by each note he explores. Coming up in New Orleans, Fortner began playing piano at age 7, following a storied lineage of improvisers, masters of time and every iteration of the blues. He earned his Bachelor of Music from Oberlin Conservatory and Master of Music in Jazz Performance from Manhattan School of Music (MSM). A champion of mentorship, Fortner has offered masterclasses at MSM, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA), Purdue University, Lafayette Summer Music Workshop, Belmont University and Oberlin Conservatory where he held a faculty position.

Pulling distinct elements from different eras, Fortner's artistry preserves the tradition and evolves the sound. He seeks connections among different musical styles that are at once deeply soulful and wildly inventive. Both his works and his insights have been featured in culturally iconic publications, from *The New York Times* to *The Root*. Accolades include the 2015 Cole Porter Fellowship awarded by the American Pianists Association, Leonore Annenberg Arts Fellowship, the 2016 Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists and, in 2020, the prestigious Shifting Foundation Grant for artistic career development.

CONTACT:

Chris Mees
C: 646.397.8705
E: chris@bnatural.nyc
W: bnatural.nyc