



GERALD CLAYTON
Blue Note Recording Artist
Yamaha Recording Artist
Pianist, Composer, Educator
www.Geraldclayton.com

Gerald Clayton searches for honest expression in every note he plays. With harmonic curiosity and critical awareness, he develops musical narratives that unfold as a result of both deliberate searching and chance uncovering. The four-time GRAMMY-nominated pianist/composer formally began his musical journey at the prestigious Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, where he received the 2002 Presidential Scholar of the Arts Award. Continuing his scholarly pursuits, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Piano Performance at USC's Thornton School of Music under the instruction of piano icon Billy Childs, after a year of intensive study with NEA Jazz Master Kenny Barron at The Manhattan School of Music. Clayton won second place in the 2006 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Piano Competition.

Expansion has become part of Clayton's artistic identity. His music is a celebration of the inherent differences in musical perspectives that promote true artistic synergy. Inclusive sensibilities have allowed him to perform and record with such distinctive artists as Diana Krall, Roy Hargrove, John Scofield, Terence Blanchard, Dianne Reeves, Frank Wess, Ambrose Akinmusire, Ben Wendel, Peter Bernstein, Dayna Stephens, Kendrick Scott, NEXT Collective, Ben Williams, Sachal Vasandani, Terell Stafford & Dick Oatts, Michael Rodriguez, Terri Lyne Carrington, Avishai Cohen and the Clayton Brothers Quintet. Clayton also has enjoyed an extended association since early 2013, touring and recording with saxophone legend Charles Lloyd, and has appeared on the saxophone legend's Blue Note albums *Wild Man Dance* (2015) and *8: Kindred Spirits (Live from The Lobero)* (2020). He also appeared on trumpeter Akinmusire's Blue Note debut *When The Heart Emerges Glistening* (2011).

In 2015-16, Clayton took on the role of Musical Director of the Monterey Jazz Festival On Tour, a project that featured his trio along with Ravi Coltrane, Nicholas Payton, Terence Blanchard and Raul Midón on guitar and vocals.

In 2016-17, Clayton turned his imaginative curiosity toward uncovering the essence of the Piedmont Blues experience and expression in early twentieth century Durham. A Duke University commission, Clayton's evening-length composition explores a mixed media performance featuring vocalist Rene Marie, gospel choir, two tap dancers and a nine-piece band including some of the most resonating voices in contemporary music.

In 2018, Clayton received an ASCAP Vanguard Award- an annual award presented by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, in recognition of "the impact of new and developing musical genres, which help shape the future of music"

2020 marks his first year as director of the Monterey Jazz Festival's Next Generation Jazz Orchestra, leading a big band of all-star high school students from around the country in performance at the Monterey Jazz Festival.

Clayton's discography as a leader reflects his evolution as an artist. His debut recording, *Two Shade* (ArtistShare), earned a 2010 GRAMMY nomination for Best Improvised Jazz Solo for his arrangement of Cole Porter's "All of You." "Battle Circle," his composition featured on The Clayton Brothers' recording *The New Song and Dance* (ArtistShare), received a GRAMMY nomination for Best Jazz Instrumental Composition in 2011. He received 2012 and 2013 GRAMMY nominations for Best Jazz Instrumental Album for *Bond: The Paris Sessions* (Concord) and *Life Forum* (Concord), his second and third album releases.

Capturing the truth in each moment's conception of sound comes naturally to Clayton. The son of beloved bassist and composer John Clayton, he enjoyed a familial apprenticeship from an early age. Clayton honors the legacy of his father and all his musical ancestors through a commitment to artistic exploration, innovation, and reinvention.

"Gerald Clayton is one of the most accomplished, distinctive and innovative pianists performing today."

- Don Was (Blue Note Records)

"A remarkable player, he seems to understand what our ear wants — blooming harmony, melodic improvisations, firm landings — and how to deliver it."

- *The New York Times*

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