

WALTER BEASLEY

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Over the past two decades, saxophonist Walter Beasley has artfully and dynamically redefined the phrase “musical Renaissance Man” for the modern generation. Considered by fans and critics alike as “the heir to Grover Washington Jr.’s throne,” the Boston-based musician has long mastered an exhilarating high wire act of balancing a successful career as a contemporary jazz recording artist and performer with an equally thriving presence in the field of music education.

Since 1998, Beasley has been one of the ten highest selling saxmen in the world while continuing his highly influential work as a full professor of music at his alma mater, The Berklee School of Music, where he began teaching in the mid-80s. In 2007, Beasley—also the highest selling full-time teacher ever—celebrated his

20th year as a best selling artist in the grand style to which he’s accustomed, adding to his extraordinary total of over 800,000 units sold. His second Heads Up release, *Ready For Love*, peaked at #2 on the Billboard Contemporary Jazz Chart and reached #1 on Smoothjazz.com. His 2005 label debut *For Her* reached the Top Five.



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Beasley also added to his growing legacy of creating instructional DVDs for young players who are not able to afford a traditional music education with his latest project, 14 Steps To Maximizing Your Performance, which is also currently available for download on his popular website (www.walterbeasley.com). His other best selling videos released through his Affable Publishing include Sound Production for the Saxophone, Hip Hop Improvisation, and Performance Workshop.

This past year, Beasley has also begun reaching out to the younger generation, sharing his experiences and educational expertise through "saxtalk blogs" on his myspace page (www.myspace.com/walter-beasleysaxtalk) and clips on YouTube. In addition, in February 2008 he begins online saxophone lessons live via web cam, and he is offering on his website tracks of his recent chakra meditations on sax. The saxophonist has done all this while enjoying throughout 2007 his busiest touring itinerary in years, doing dates up and down the East Coast (from Miami to Boston), Atlanta and Ohio, among other locales.

He recently hooked up for a handful of dates with the all-star tour To Grover, With Love, helmed by Grammy winning keyboardist/producer Jason Miles and featuring Gerald Veasley, Chuck Loeb, Buddy Williams and Andy Snitzer. The ensemble will be playing the world famous Berks Jazz Festival in Spring 2008.

Amazingly, Beasley has partaken in all of these exciting activities while maintaining a full teaching schedule at Berklee. Currently, he teaches vocal and rhythm section ensembles (in both classroom and performance settings), private sax lessons, vocal delivery for singers and improvisation for instrumentalists, both on campus and at home. He has also developed an active side business as a career consultant for aspiring musicians. His areas of expertise include: maximizing musical performance and skills; overcoming performance anxiety; jazz/R&B improvisation; vocal delivery; saxophone technique/sound production; and R&B/jazz ensemble performance.



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Speaking about his ongoing commitment to education in the face of numerous temptations to leave and become a full time recording and touring musician and artist, Beasley says, “I like to say I do not need to teach, and that is why I teach. What I have learned is that I am responsible for molding the next generation of musicians, and that is a wonderful responsibility that nothing can take me away from. All my life, I’ve heard professors say that you cannot teach all people to be soulful musicians. I have consistently tried to change that myth, dedicating my life and career to the reality that a good professor can indeed teach soulful performance. That’s become a specialty of mine that I am very proud of. A plant may grow regardless of whether you take care of it or not, but if you trim it and shape it every few months, it will flourish beyond what you could have imagined. I like to think I am shaping, molding and trimming those who will become the musical

greats of tomorrow.”

One of the secrets of Beasley’s success as an educator is his seven-day a week work ethic, which includes his belief that Monday is his favorite day of the week—a bold philosophy that he imparts to his students who may at first feel otherwise. “I’m in love with my work and this wonderfully crazy work ethic,” he says. “I truly love the challenge of being able to transform a rhythm section that has nothing to offer up front into a section that comes to believe in itself as a unit. That’s the most gratifying feeling a professor can have, making that kind of difference. I love playing my own music live, but no moment I’ve ever had onstage matches the excitement of discovering this kind of success in the classroom. But that’s the beauty of my dual career—I love doing both!”

One of the top five best-selling African-American saxophonists in the world since the late 90’s, Beasley—while establishing himself as a regular presence on the Billboard Contemporary Jazz chart--has performed over the years with contemporary jazz and R&B icons Brian McKnight, Gerald Albright, Ronnie Laws, Kirk Whalum, Bob James, Norman Brown, George Howard, Art Porter, Stephanie Mills, Vanessa Williams and Rachelle Ferrell. He has also opened concerts for traditional jazz legends Art Blakey and Dexter Gordon.

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As an educator and consultant, he has worked with Lalah Hathaway, Jeremy Ragsdale, Christina Watson, Carmen Algarin, Walter Smith, and Ian Rapien, offering guidance and helping them to find their creative flavor. Renowned artist and former classmate Branford Marsalis describes the saxman as “an anomaly; a successful performing musician who possesses the rare skill of understanding the musical process beyond the intuitive. This special ability enables Walter to communicate with aspiring musicians in a way that removes the sense of mystery that sometimes enshrouds our profession.”

Walter Beasley’s musical journey began in the early 1970s in his hometown of El Centro, California. When his aunt gave him his first Grover Washington, Jr. record at age nine, it opened Beasley’s young ears and mind to the limitless possibilities of the sax. Before long, he bought a copy of Roberta Flack & Donny Hathaway’s 1972 collaboration album. These two classic recordings became the foundation of the young saxman and vocalist’s musical awakening.

By his early teens, Beasley was playing saxophone in various bands around Southern California. “I started singing in Spanish at around 14,” he says. “I was like an anomaly - the black kid in southern California, singing in Spanish. People got a kick out of it. I learned from playing Latin music how important romance was, and is, in music. Singing and playing those songs, I think, forever shaped the way I wanted to convey messages to people.”

Beasley graduated from Berklee College of Music in the early '80s, alongside future superstar classmates like saxophonist Branford Marsalis and vocalist Rachelle Ferrell. He took a teaching position at the school a year later - initially as a short-term gig, but one that has lasted more than 20 years. “I was only planning on staying for a year or two, getting a record deal and then moving back to California,” he says. “But once I saw musicians move an audience through the use of techniques that I showed them, I was a sucker for teaching.



WALTER BEASLEY

BACKGROUND



Personal: Born and raised in El Centro, California, currently resides in Boston, Massachusetts

Education: Berklee College of Music in Boston

Occupation: Recording artist, performer, full professor at Berklee College of Music, performance consultant, and music entrepreneur (founder and CEO of Affable Publishing and Affable Records)

Principal Instruments: Soprano/Alto Saxophone, Voice

Performance genres: R&B, vocal performance, contemporary jazz

Musical Influences: Grover Washington, Jr., Roberta Flack, David Sanborn, Donny Hathaway, Cannonball Adderley, Johnny Hodges, Sonny Stitt, Dexter Gordon, Peabo Bryson, Michael Ruff, John Klemmer and Ronny Laws, George Benson

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FACT SHEET

Points of note:

- As a saxophonist and singer, he is unique in recording industry, and as such his sales and airplay are unmatched.
- Also the best-selling full-time college professor and recording artist
- Since 1998, Beasley has been one of the top five best-selling African-American saxophonists in the world.
- Over the last three decades, Beasley has been a regular presence in the top 20 of Billboard's contemporary jazz charts
- His latest, Ready for Love, debuted on the Billboard Contemporary Jazz Charts at #2, with the single, Ready for Love, as #1 at radioandrecords.com and smoothjazz.com. The single spent 29 weeks on radio and record charts.
- Ready for Love was among the top 6 most played singles of 2007.
- Walter Beasley is the 9th highest played artist of the year on radioandrecords.com

Organizations/Memberships:

- SESAC (performing rights organization)
- Berklee's Association of Faculty of African Descent:
Goal is to increase enrollment of African-American students and educators at Berklee
- Berklee Presidential Scholarship Spokesperson: awards talented students from under-represented groups with a full scholarship and room and board.

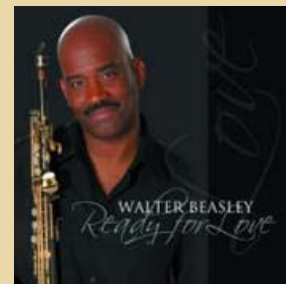
Awards and Accolades:

- 2003 Boston Music Awards, Jazz Album of the Year (Go with the Flow)
- 2001 Boston Music Awards, Outstanding Jazz Artist
- 2001 Berklee College of Music Trustee Award for advancing the mission and values of the college
- 2001 South Middlesex Men's Club Leadership Award for community service and support of youth development in music.
- 2001 SESAC National Performing Activity Award for the song "Comin' at Cha"
- 2002 SESAC National Performing Activity Award for the song "Rendezvous"

DISCOGRAPHY/EQUIPMENT

Recordings, as a Leader:

- Ready For Love (Heads Up, 2007)
- For Her (Heads Up, 2005)
- Go With The Flow (N-Coded Music, 2003)
- Rendezvous (Shanachie, 2002)
- Won't You Let Me Love You (Shanachie, 2000)
- For Your Pleasure (Shanachie, 1998)
- Tonight We Love (Shanachie, 1997)
- Live & More (Ignition, 1996)
- Private Time (Mercury, 1995)
- Intimacy (Mercury, 1992)
- Just Kickin' It (Mercury, 1989)
- Walter Beasley (Polydor, 1987)
- Walter Beasley Live and More (Affable Records, 1996)



Recordings, with others:

- With Chuck Loeb
- In A Heartbeat (Shanachie, 2001)
- Listen (Shanachie, 1999)
- With Marky Mark And The Funky Bunch
- Music For The People (Interscope, 1991)
- With Jason Miles
- Maximum Grooves, Coast To Coast (Telarc, 2004)
- With Nick Scotti
- Nick Scotti (Warner Brothers, 1993)
- With Kim Waters
- From The Heart (Shanachie, 2001)

DVDs:

- Walter Beasley Live at Scullers (Affable Records, 2003)

Educational DVDs:

- Hip-Hop Improvisation (Affable Publishing, 2003)
- Sound Production for the Saxophone (Affable Publishing, 2003)
- Educational Downloads:
 - Sound Production for the Saxophone
 - Hip Hop Improvisation
 - 14 Steps To Maximizing Your Performance
 - Circular Breathing

Handbook:

- Performance Insights For Musicians (Affable Publishing, 2003)

Equipment:

- Soprano - Keilwerth SX 90 with the mouthpiece that came with the horn and
- 2 1/2 Rico Royal reeds.
- Alto - Keilwerth SX 90 with the mouthpiece that (4 star) 20 years ago and 2 1/2 Rico Royal reeds.

TESTIMONIALS

“ Walter Beasley is an anomaly: a successful performing musician who possesses the rare skill of understanding the musical process beyond the intuitive. This special ability enables Walter to communicate with aspiring musicians in a way that removes the sense of mystery that sometimes enshrouds our profession. ”

- Branford Marsalis

“ If there is an heir to Grover’s throne, it’s definitely found in Walter Beasley. ”

- Thomas R. Erdmann, Jazzreview.com

On For Her

“ Beasley’s new CD, For Her, is cut directly from the Grover mold without stealing or being derivative. The album is full of exciting and memorable melodies, stimulating improvised solos, an occasional love ballad and velvet-like washes. It’s also nice that Beasley doesn’t hide his ample technique - just witness the fadeout solos on ‘Let’s Ride’ and ‘She’s All That’ as well as his huge hit ‘Precious Moments’ from Go With The Flow. ”

- Thomas R. Erdmann, Saxophone Journal

“ As an interesting project, acclaimed saxophonist/vocalist Walter Beasley releases a romance-themed recording, For Her. The album, however, is not a constant string of sticky, cloying ballads. While Beasley’s title track and ‘Don’t Say Goodnight’ are emotional outpourings, ‘Coolness’ drives with uptempo swing and ‘What Ya Feelin’?’ bounces like Saturday night. ”

- One Way Magazine

“ Walter Beasley easily goes back and forth between moods taking the listener on a journey through the romantic, the playful, and the serious aspects of relationships. We’ve all been on the same ride. Thankfully, he chose to set his to music so we could experience it with him. ”

- Mary Bentley, Smoothviews.com

On Walter the Educator, Consultant, and Mentor

“Walter Beasley is the most challenging teacher I’ve ever had...and I love him for it. Besides being one of my biggest inspirations as a professional musician and performer, he has also taught me more than anybody I’ve ever met. From my standpoint as a singer who improvises, Walter helped me find more creative outlets for my improvisation, and at the same time gave me effective techniques for making an honest, meaningful connection to my audiences. (He also didn’t let me get away with ANYTHING in class...) Bottom line: I wouldn’t be able to face this crazy industry with so much confidence, if it weren’t for Walter’s tough love and guidance. Thank you, Walter!”

- Jeremy Ragsdale

“Walter helped me in so many ways. He addressed various technical issues with me (with care and clarity) that many other teachers had overlooked. It transformed my singing. Often teachers either specialize in technique or delivery - but Walter is brilliant in both areas. Walter can teach what for most vocal teachers is the un-teachable: rhythmic tension and release, melodic tension and release, relationship between melody and lyric, use of dynamics to convey the story - the list goes on and on and on. Walter addresses all the things which combine to form a vocal personality, while all the while instilling confidence in the student, and the desire to rise to his expectations. Walter literally helps his students to find their ‘voices’ as artists, and he helped me to find mine.

“Studying with Walter is without question one of the most musically stimulating, challenging, rewarding and exciting periods in my musical development thus far, and I am so grateful to have the opportunity to study with a master.”

- Oli Rockberger

TESTIMONIALS

On Walter's Educational Products

“ Smooth Jazz impresario Walter Beasley has taken his enormous talents to a higher level by writing a desperately needed book to aid musicians in improving their craft. This book will soon become the Bible for up-and-coming musicians, and we all have Walter Beasley to thank for showing us the difference between being good and being great. If you follow Walter's example of discipline and dedication, there is no option but to improve what you do as an artist. ”

- Charles J. Ogletree, Jr., Harvard Law School, on the handbook
Performance Insight for Musicians by Walter Beasley

“ This DVD is essential for sax players of any level. Mr. Beasley's easy to follow instructions clearly dictate through words, diagrams, and real life examples how to produce a great sound on the saxophone. The amount of knowledge that is passed along in the DVD will give you years of experience in just a couple hours. I would advise beginners to get it so that they don't have to fix mistakes later on, and advise veterans to watch it to fix the little specific things that might be keeping them from an even better sound. It is a great buy! ”

- Kent Moore (Monterey, California via Amazon.com)
on Sound Production for the Saxophone DVD

“ In this DVD, legendary sax player Walter Beasley brings old school and new school musical worlds together - one groove, one beat and one chord at a time. As a jazz player (and a keen lover of hip hop and funk) I've been wanting for a while to find approaches to playing over hip hop grooves, creating interesting solos over repeated bass lines. I have been continually frustrated by the absence of such products in the market to help me with this, and I was about to give up altogether on finding something...that is, until I found this DVD. ”

- O.R. (London, United Kingdom VIA Amazon.com)
on Hip Hop Improvisation DVD