

Jazz ICONS

RON CARTER TRIO

December 10, 2023, 3pm | Trinity Church

RON CARTER

Ron Carter is among the most original, prolific, and influential bassists in jazz and has played on seminal albums in many genres. He has appeared on more than 2,200 albums and has a Guinness World Record to prove it!

In jazz: From 1963 to 1968, Carter was a member of the acclaimed Miles Davis Quintet. He can be heard on many iconic jazz records of the 1960s and '70s such as *Speak No Evil*, *Maiden Voyage*, *Speak Like a Child*, and *Red Clay*, to name a few.

In other music genres: After leaving the quintet he embarked on a prolific 50-year freelance career that has spanned vastly different music genres and continues to this day. He recorded with Roberta Flack and Aretha Franklin and with Gil Scott-Heron on *Pieces of a Man*; appeared on the seminal hip-hop album *The Low End Theory* with a Tribe Called Quest; played on albums by Billy Joel, Bette Midler, Paul Simon, and more; and wrote and recorded pieces for string quartets and Bach chorales for two to eight basses.

As a bandleader: Carter spends at least half of each year on worldwide tours with his various groups: Ron Carter's Golden Striker Trio, and Foursight Quartet, the Foursight Quartet, the Ron Carter Nonet, and Ron Carter's Great Big Band. He has recorded multiple albums with his groups.

As an author: Carter has shared his expertise in a series of books in which he explains his creative process and teaches bassists of all levels how to improve their skills and develop their own unique sound. He also penned an autobiography, *Finding the Right Notes*. In 2021 he pioneered a new type of music transcription in the book *Chartography*, showing not only the bass line of one song he and his band played over the years but also how the band responded and how the entire tune transformed over time.

As a teacher: Carter was Artistic Director of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Studies while it was located in Boston and spent 18 years on the faculty of the music department of The City College of New York, where he is now Distinguished Professor Emeritus. He also taught at The Juilliard School and at the Manhattan School of Music.

Awards and honors: Carter is a three-time GRAMMY winner. He was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette for his contributions to Japan–United States relations, the medallion and title of Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters by France, and numerous outstanding bassist awards by the music press. He was named Outstanding Bassist of the Decade by the *Detroit News*, Jazz Bassist of the Year by DownBeat magazine, and Most Valuable Player by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. He has honorary doctorates from The Juilliard School, Berklee College of Music, University of Michigan, New England Conservatory, Clark University, Manhattan School of Music, and the University of Rochester.

Film appearances: In October 2022 PBS released a full-length feature film documentary, *Ron Carter: Finding the Right Notes*, about Carter's life and legend. He appeared as himself on an episode of HBO's *Treme* and in *Round Midnight*, among other films.



RUSSELL MALONE

Guitarist Russell Malone, born in 1963 in Albany, Georgia, is a virtuoso whose broad playing range includes everything from down-home, gut-bucket blues to lush, melodic ballads. He was first exposed to music in church where a wide range of instruments, from drums to tambourines to washboards, were used to make music. Before he reached the age of five his mother bought him a toy guitar—a green plastic four-string—and he began copying the church players.

A major turning point came when Malone saw B.B. King play “How Blue Can You Get” on the popular ’70s TV show *Sanford and Son*. After also seeing Chet Atkins, Kenny Burrell, Glen Campbell, Johnny Cash, Roy Clark, and George Benson perform on television, he developed an interest in blues and country music but ultimately chose jazz. Mr. Malone taught himself to play by sitting next to a record player and playing along with the recordings.

Malone, who credits such artists as vocalist Freddy Cole and pianist Billy Taylor for invaluable mentoring and advice, has toured internationally with Diana Krall, receiving critical acclaim as her right hand both in

concert and on the CDs *All for You* and *Love Scenes*, her two GRAMMY-nominated albums. He played a prominent part in Benny Green’s 1997 recording *Kaleidoscope* and participated in the launch of the record on a brief U.S. tour with Benny Green’s quintet. He toured for two years with master jazz organist Jimmy Smith and then became part of Harry Connick Jr.’s orchestra for more than four years. He has appeared at festivals and in clubs and concert halls, and he has recorded with artists including Clarence Carter, Little Anthony, Peabo Bryson, Mulgrew Miller, The Winans, Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson, Bucky Pizzarelli, Jack McDuff, Junior Manz, Roy Hargrove, Christian McBride, Ray Brown, Monty Alexander, Billy Taylor, and Gary Burton. He also performed in Robert Altman’s 1996 movie *Kansas City*.

Malone made his recording debut as a leader in 1992 with his self-titled CD *Russell Malone* and a year later recorded the disc *Black Butterfly* (both on Columbia). Other recordings include 1998’s *Sweet Georgia Peach*, 2000’s *Look Who’s Here* (both on Impulse-Universal), and *Heartstrings* (Verve, 2001). He also played on the great bassist Ray Brown’s final recording, *Ray Brown, Monty Alexander and Russell Malone* (Telarc, 2002).

DONALD VEGA

Donald Vega was trained classically in piano in his native Nicaragua. He emigrated to the United States at age 14 and found a musical home with the Colburn School of Performing Arts (CSPA). He began his studies there in classical piano with Teresa de Jong Pombo and Dr. Louis Lepley.

Vega began learning the language of jazz from mentor Billy Higgins at the World Stage and continued at CSPA with Jeffrey Lavner, then later with bassist John Clayton at the University of Southern California. During his time in Los Angeles he was mentored by and performed with the celebrated conguero Francisco Aguabella as well as notable bassist Al McKibbin. He went on to graduate from the Manhattan School of Music and the Juilliard School, where he studied with piano great Kenny Barron, Phil Markowitz, and Gary Dial.

Vega currently performs internationally as the pianist for world-renowned bassist Ron Carter’s Golden Striker Trio with whom he has recorded several albums. He is also a professor at the Juilliard School and Hofstra University and sits on the board of BackCountry Jazz, a non-profit organization that provides music education programs and performances to underprivileged youth.

Vega’s debut album, *Tomorrows*, was released in 2008 to rave reviews. For his sophomore album, *Spiritual Nature* (Resonance Records, 2012), he was joined by the rhythm tandem of bassist Christian McBride and drummer Lewis Nash. Vega teamed up again with Nash on his third album, *With Respect to Monty* (Resonance Records, 2015), along with bassist Hassan Shakur and long-time friend and Grammy-nominated artist Anthony Wilson on guitar. Vega recently finished recording his latest album, *As I Travel*, with Nash on drums and John Patitucci on bass and featuring Luisito Quintero on percussion.

PLEASE DO NOT TAKE PHOTOS OR VIDEOS DURING THE CONCERT.

Jazz Icons is presented by Trinity Church Wall Street in collaboration with JAZZ HOUSE KIDS and is curated by 8-time GRAMMY winner Christian McBride, artistic director of JAZZ HOUSE.

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