

Lonnie Plaxico

The middle child in a family of musicians, Chicago-born Lonnie Plaxico inherited a gift for music that was discovered and nurtured early. By the age of twelve he had taught himself to play the electric bass, and he was soon venturing into Chicago's music scene, renowned for its mix of jazz, funk and blues. It was not long before the young musician made his first recording, featuring his family's band. At the age of just fourteen, having already performed alongside several prominent Chicago jazz figures, Lonnie Plaxico turned professional, playing the electric and acoustic bass with equal facility.

In 1980 Plaxico moved to New York and soon began to appear with such artists as Chet Baker, Dexter Gordon and Wynton Marsalis. His first extended tenure was with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers: between 1983 and 1986, Lonnie performed on twelve of Blakey's albums, including the Grammy Award-winning *New York Scene*. In 1986 he joined Jack DeJohnette's *Special Edition*, continuing with that group until 1993. Presently, Plaxico is the musical director and featured bassist for Cassandra Wilson; their critically acclaimed and award-winning collaboration has now spanned fifteen years.

Plaxico's recording and performance catalog is equally impressive for its caliber, depth and diversity. He has appeared with such luminaries as Sonny Stitt, Junior Cook, David Murray, Alice Coltrane, Stanley Turrentine, Joe Sample and Dizzy Gillespie. Just as noteworthy are his performances with younger artists - among them Abbey Lincoln, Steve Coleman, Rachelle Farrell and Dianna Reeves. Lonnie has also recorded with Bill Cosby, Lonnie Kiston Smith, Ravi Coltrane and Barbara Dennerlein, as well as his Grammy-winning collaborations with Art Blakey and Cassandra Wilson. He has also recorded six critically acclaimed albums as leader, *Plaxico* (1990), *Iridescence* (1992), *Short Takes* (1993), *With All Your Heart* (1994), *Emergence* (2000), and *Mélange* (2001).

Lonnie Plaxico's musicianship is probably best expressed in his masterful integration of different forms - combining the rigorous technique of classical, the improvisation of jazz, and the rawness of funk into one exhilarating musical experience.