

Nicholas Payton

Nicholas Payton's music career began much as Jazz itself did, marching in New Orleans street parades, and his playing certainly reflects that. But just as Jazz expanded beyond its New Orleans roots and dancing rhythms, this young trumpeter has also expanded, embracing Jazz styles as varied as such of Louis Armstrong, Clark Terry, Miles Davis and Wynton Marsalis.

Nicholas' love affair with the trumpet began at age 4, when he requested an instrument as a Christmas present. With the help of his mother (a classical pianist) and his father Walter (a renowned New Orleans bassist), Payton developed quickly. Even before he could read music, he had developed his ear to the point that at age 9 he was accompanying his father on gigs with the Young Tuxedo Brass Band. His first regular job, aged twelve was with a band made out of youngsters called "The All Star Jazz Band". They played around New Orleans and even at some Jazz Festivals in Europe.

Later, he was introduced (via telephone!) to Wynton Marsalis, who took personal interest in the development of the young artist, sending him tapes to study and recommending him to bandleaders such as Elvin Jones and Marcus Roberts.

By the time he was in high school he was working steadily, playing street parades and other engagements around New Orleans. He also enrolled at the New Orleans Centre for Creative Arts, where he studied with trumpet master and Jazz department director Clyde Kerr Jr. After graduating from NOCCA, Payton went on to study at the University of New Orleans with Ellis Marsalis. By that time he was already getting calls from bandleaders around the country.

Since 1990, Nicholas has been working with trumpet master Clark Terry, and has toured with Marcus Roberts (1992), the Jazz Futures II (1993) and Elvin Jones (1994). He has been featured at the "Jazz at the Lincoln Centre" program, playing the works of the classic masters Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver, Count Basie or Duke Ellington.

His first album as a leader, "From this Moment", on Verve Records, appeared in 1995. His collaboration with homeboy altoist Jesse Davis, "High Standards", on Concord Records, is in the market since 1994.

He will be presented on the "RISING STARS" Jazz circuit in Europe in March 1996 for the first time throughout clubs all over Europe.