



## Christian McBride Big Band *Without Further Ado, Vol. 1*

Nine-time GRAMMY® Award-winning bassist, bandleader, and composer **Christian McBride** returns with ***Without Further Ado, Vol. 1***, out August 29 on Mack Avenue Records. The fourth release from the acclaimed **Christian McBride Big Band** is a star-studded affair featuring an eclectic lineup of special guests, including **Sting, Andy Summers, Samara Joy, Dianne Reeves, José James, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Jeffrey Osborne, and Antoinette Henry**.

McBride is widely revered for his almost superhuman versatility. Focus simply on his musical career, and you find the most admired and in-demand bassist in modern jazz, whose peerless virtuosity, bottomless groove, and profound sensitivity reach far beyond the boundaries of genre, to collaborations with an almost unparalleled list of artists: Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Paul McCartney, Billie Eilish, Wynton Marsalis, McCoy Tyner, Pat Metheny, Quincy Jones, The Roots, Kathleen Battle, Celine Dion, Diana Krall, and James Brown – just to name a few.

An inspired bandleader, McBride helms ensembles spanning the spectrum of his wide-ranging influences – the tradition-minded acoustic quintet Inside Straight, the adventurous quartet New Jawn, the generation-bridging Ursa Major, and his powerhouse Big Band. As a prolific composer, he has contributed memorable pieces to each of these bands, and penned the ambitious masterwork *The Movement Revisited: A Musical Portrait of Four Icons* — a five-part suite dedicated to the lives and legacies of civil rights giants Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, and Muhammad Ali.

But that's just one trajectory of McBride's staggeringly diverse career, which also includes the roles of producer, arranger, educator, and host of NPR's public radio program *Jazz Night in America* as well as *The Lowdown: Conversations with Christian* on SiriusXM. He is a renowned artistic director, taking over that role for the Newport Jazz Festival from its legendary founder, the late George Wein. McBride also holds artistic director titles at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, the TD James Moody Jazz Festival, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), and JAZZ HOUSE KiDS. In 2026 he will launch the first ever McBride's World at Sea cruise, with all of his critically acclaimed bands and loads of special guests onboard.

Several of those paths converge on *Without Further Ado, Vol. 1*. For the first time in its recorded history, the 17-piece ensemble turns the spotlight over to a host of special guest vocalists, and McBride has assembled a jaw-dropping array of talent for the occasion, calling in collaborators from the worlds of jazz, rock, R&B and soul.

The inspiration and many of the arrangements for the album grew out of the annual NJPAC Gala, for which the Christian McBride Big Band has served as house band, and McBride as musical director, since 2012. "We've always invited a bunch of great singers to come and perform at the Gala," McBride says, "and as musical director, I'm responsible for arranging all of the music. After so many years of writing big band charts for these incredible singers, I realized that I had stacks of music that had only been played once. This has been a fantastic opportunity to finally record some of these arrangements and to play them with some of my favorite singers."

Only a first-call musician of his caliber could reunite two members of The Police, as McBride does on the iconic band's classic "Murder By Numbers," which opens *Without Further Ado, Vol. 1*. While McBride has enjoyed a long-time musical relationship with **Sting**, he had never before worked with guitarist **Andy Summers**, who lends his singular six-string artistry to the song that he co-wrote with Sting. The new

rendition of "Murder By Numbers," originally released as the B-side of the mega-hit "Every Breath You Take," marks the first time that the two bandmates have played together since The Police's 2007-2008 reunion tour.

"I feel very honored to have two-thirds of The Police on a track that they originally created together," McBride says.

That once-in-a-lifetime reunion is followed by another on the album, as legendary soul singer **Jeffrey Osborne** joins the CMBB to revisit "(Every Time I Turn Around) Back in Love Again," the 1977 number one hit by his band L.T.D. "Old school R&B is such a part of my DNA," McBride explains.

"I invited Jeffrey Osborne to sing with my big band at NJPAC back in 2013, and as soon as we went into the main groove of 'Back in Love Again,' man, those people got up and started dancing, hollering and shouting. I had flashbacks to seeing L.T.D. at the Spectrum in Philly back in 1979, when they were opening for the Jacksons." No doubt listeners will have a similar reaction to this new take on the classic song, with the Big Band's infectious funk coupled with Osborne's timeless, soulful voice.

If there is any doubt that we are fortunate to be living through a vocal jazz renaissance at the moment, the multi-generational line-up of singers that McBride has assembled for *Without Further Ado, Vol. 1* definitively settles that debate. One of the music's most brilliant rising stars, **Samara Joy**, applies a beyond-her-years maturity to a breathtaking version of the standard "Old Folks." At 25 years old, Joy is already a multiple GRAMMY® winner, most notably being named Best New Artist in 2023. Joy has family roots in McBride's beloved birthplace of Philadelphia, and rose to fame via her 2019 victory in the Sarah Vaughan International Vocal Jazz Competition held at NJPAC.

"It's a little strange to hear such a young person sound so well seasoned," McBride says. "It makes me wonder what she's going to sound like in 25 or 30 years. I can't even imagine."

Deep Philly ties link McBride to emerging vocalist **Antoinette Henry**, a graduate of the city's High School for the Creative and Performing Arts (aka CAPA) – McBride's own alma mater, where he attended a class that famously included Joey DeFrancesco, Kurt Rosenwinkel, and members of The Roots and Boyz II Men. McBride first heard Henry sing in 2013 when she appeared in an off-Broadway show celebrating the music of Harold Arlen called *The Wonderful Wizard of Song*, while also working as a server at Dizzy's Club at Jazz at Lincoln Center where she first met McBride. He went on to produce her 2014 debut album, *With Love*, of which one of the songs was "Come Rain or Come Shine." Henry shines brightly on this big band version.

McBride has a long history with both **José James** and **Dianne Reeves**. The former, who artfully blurs the lines between jazz, hip-hop, pop, soul and rock in his work, has been a frequent guest with the Big Band, which backs him for a blues-soaked take on Bobby Timmons' "Moanin'." McBride has arranged a host of songs for Reeves, including this intimate, sultry exploration of the Carole King/Gerry Goffin favorite "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow," based on a small group chart by Yellowjackets keyboardist Russell Ferrante for Reeves' 1997 album *That Day...*

Of the visionary **Cécile McLorin Salvant**, McBride says, "What I love about her is that she's so creative and so fearless. She has a vivid imagination and balanced creativity." Case in point: Salvant's approach to Cole Porter's "All Through the Night," known as a dreamy ballad, now transformed at her behest into an uptempo burner.

The CMBB gets its chance to shine to close out the session, excelling on the laid back swing of the third movement from McBride's "Op. 49 – Cold Chicken Suite, 3rd Movement," featuring the eloquent phrasing of saxophonist Ron Blake, one of many longtime members of this stellar ensemble. While they may cede center stage to a roster of remarkable vocalists on this session, it is the chemistry, elegance and fire of the Christian McBride Big Band that make these performances so stunning. Without further ado, let the music take it from here.