



## CHARLES LLOYD Biography

"Charles Lloyd is an international treasure." *Carlos Santana*

"Follow the career of Charles Lloyd, and you see a map of great jazz across half a century. His shows, full of momentum and intuition, perfectly represent the idea that the best jazz needs to be experienced live." *The New York Times*

"He's expansive in his musical discourse yet without a wasted note." *Wall Street Journal*

"Jazz improvisation as complex and far-reaching as the Lloyd quartet had to offer can be a daunting listening experience. ... The listener is taken on a journey through gravity-less improvisational space. To the credit of Lloyd and his players, that journey was illuminated by one musical enlightenment after another." *Los Angeles Times*

"Lloyd is one of the greats, rather like Joan Miro in modern art, he has no peer save himself. Music of total transport and delight." *Jazzwise*

### Recent honors:

2012 Brass Note on Beale Street  
2013 Montreal International Jazz Festival Miles Davis Award  
2014 Laureate Alfa Jazz International Music Award  
2014 Monterey Jazz Festival Jazz Legend Award  
2015 NEA Jazz Master Fellow  
2015 Honorary Doctorate Berklee School of Music  
2016 Lobero Ghostlight Society Artist Luminary Award  
2016 JJA Tenor Saxophonist of the year  
2016 Bohemia Jazz Award (Czechoslovakia)  
2016 Memphis Music Hall of Fame  
2016 Downbeat Critics Poll Group of the Year "Charles Lloyd New Quartet"  
2017 Lifetime Achievement Award, Jazz Gallery  
2017 JJA Tenor Saxophonist of the year  
2017 JJA Medium Group, Charles Lloyd & the Marvels  
2017 San Sebastian Jazz Festival Lifetime Achievement Award

The critical consensus is that **Charles Lloyd** has never sounded better. The depth of his expression reflects a lifetime of experience. Lloyd has a legendary history in the music world, and could certainly be in a position to slow down and rest on his laurels. But looking back has never been of great interest to this tender warrior; "Go forward," is his motto, as he keeps shifting to a higher, well calibrated gear. In 2015 he became a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master and was awarded an honorary doctorate from Berklee College of Music.

His concerts and recordings are events of pristine beauty and elegance, full of intensely felt emotion and passion that touches deep inside the heart. This is not entertainment, but the powerful uncorrupted expression of beauty through music. When music vibrates, the soul vibrates and touches the spirit within. "Mr. Lloyd has come up with a strange and beautiful distillation of the American experience, part abandoned and wild, part immensely controlled and sophisticated." *Peter Watrous, The New York Times*

Charles Lloyd was born in Memphis, Tennessee, on March 15, 1938. Like New Orleans, 400 miles to the south on the Mississippi, Memphis has a rich river culture and musical heritage saturated in blues, gospel and jazz. Lloyd's ancestry of African, Cherokee, Mongolian, and Irish reflects a similar rich culture. He was given his first saxophone at the age of 9, and was riveted to 1940's radio broadcasts by Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Billie Holiday and Duke Ellington. His early teachers included pianist Phineas Newborn and saxophonist Irvin Reason. His closest childhood friend was the great trumpeter Booker Little. As a teenager Lloyd played jazz with saxophonist George Coleman and was a sideman for blues greats Johnny Ace, Bobby Blue Bland, Howlin' Wolf and B.B. King.

Classical music also exerted a strong pull on the young Lloyd. In 1956 he left Memphis for Los Angeles to earn a degree in music at USC where he studied with Halsey Stevens, a foremost Bartók authority. While his days were spent in academia, Lloyd spent nights getting educated on the job in L.A.'s jazz clubs, playing with Ornette Coleman, Billy Higgins, Scott La Faro, Don Cherry, Charlie Haden, Eric Dolphy, Bobby Hutcherson and other leading west coast jazz artists. He also was a member of the Gerald Wilson big band.

In 1960 Lloyd was invited to become music director of Chico Hamilton's group when Dolphy left to join Charles Mingus's band. The Hungarian guitarist Gabor Szabo and bassist Albert "Sparky" Stinson soon joined Lloyd in the band. Hamilton's most memorable albums for Impulse Records, *Passin' Thru* and *Man from Two Worlds*, featured music arranged and written almost entirely by Lloyd, and during this period of prolific composing he was also finding his unique voice as a saxophonist. A memorable collaboration took place between Lloyd and the Nigerian master drummer Babatunde Olatunji, with whom the saxophonist played when he wasn't on the road with Hamilton.

Lloyd joined the Cannonball Adderley Sextet in 1964, and performed alongside Nat Adderley, Joe Zawinul, Sam Jones and Louis Hayes. He remained with Cannonball for two years, and to this day continues to acknowledge the important role Cannon played in his own development as a leader. In 1964 Lloyd signed with CBS Records and began to record as a leader. His Columbia recordings, *Discovery*, (1964) and *Of Course, Of Course*, (1965) featured sidemen including Roy Haynes and Tony Williams on drums, Richard Davis and Ron Carter on bass, Gabor Szabo on guitar and Don Friedman on piano, and led to his being voted *Downbeat Magazine's* "New Star." *Of Course, Of Course* was reissued on Mosaic Records in 2006.

Lloyd left Cannonball Adderley in 1965 to form his own quartet, a brilliant ensemble that introduced the jazz world to the talents of pianist Keith Jarrett, drummer Jack DeJohnette and bassist Cecil McBee. Their first release together was a studio recording, *Dream Weaver*, followed by *Forest Flower: Live at Monterey*, (1966). *Forest Flower* made history as one of the first jazz recordings to sell a million copies, and the album's firsts continued as it became a stunning crossover success that appealed to a popular mass market audiences and gained heavy airplay on FM radio. The Quartet was the first jazz group to appear at the famed Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco and other rock palaces and shared billing with Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Cream, the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane.

In 1967 Charles Lloyd was voted "Jazz Artist of the Year" by *Down Beat*, and the Quartet was invited to tour the world. The Charles Lloyd Quartet found a warm reception in Europe at the new jazz festivals in Montreux, Antibes, and Molde. Its performances in the Far East, the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc nations of Europe often marked the first time these audiences had heard an American jazz group live.

- Credited by many musicians with anticipating the World Music movement by incorporating cadences of many cultures in his compositions as early as the late 1950s, Charles Lloyd describes his music as having always "danced on many shores."
- From the moment he first came to prominence as the young music director of the Chico Hamilton Quintet in 1960, Lloyd began to take audiences on journeys that traversed enormous distances. Over nearly five decades, his compositions have punctuated the post-bop period, embraced the traditional music of a host of world cultures and enlivened the psychedelic 1960s with avant-garde improvisation.
- Lloyd was one of the first jazz artists to sell a million copies of a recording: *Forest Flower*, and then he surprised the music world by walking away from performing just at the point that he was dubbed a jazz superstar. Actually he was just following a trajectory that was taking him closer to the essence of the music he was hearing.

- At the peak of the Cold War in 1967, Lloyd made headlines when his Quartet became the first jazz group from the U.S. to play in the USSR by invitation of the Soviet people rather than through government sponsorship. Its first stop was Tallinn and subsequent concerts took place in Leningrad and Moscow.
- The Charles Lloyd Quartet was the first jazz group to perform at the legendary Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco. The acoustic group fused virtuoso improvising with a constantly changing combination of musical tropes, incorporating the challenge of avant-garde or “free jazz” with elements of non-Western music, impressionistic harmonies and occasional rock rhythms in open-ended musical flights that echoed the free spirit of the psychedelic 1960s. Electric jazz/rock germinated in a series of original performances that, ironically, were acoustic. He was invited to guest on recordings with the Doors, the Birds, The Grateful Dead, Ashish and Pranesh Khan, and the Beach Boys. Miles Davis and other jazz figures were highly influenced by Lloyd's explorations and soon plugged in to play for the young fans that Lloyd had reached through his acoustic outings.
- He was the first jazz musician to perform at the classical music festival in Bergen, Norway.

At the height of his career in 1970, Lloyd disbanded the quartet and dropped from sight, withdrawing to pursue an inner journey in Big Sur, the wild haven that had previously attracted other artists and seekers including Robinson Jeffers, Langston Hughes, Henry Miller, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Jack Kerouac, Jean Varda and Jamie DeAngulo.

Despite recording several albums during the 1970s and occasionally appearing as a sideman with various rock groups, he practically disappeared from the jazz scene. During the 1970s Lloyd played extensively with The Beach Boys both on their studio recordings and as a member of their touring band. In the late 1970s Lloyd was a member of Celebration, a band composed of members of the Beach Boys' touring band as well as Mike Love and Al Jardine. Celebration released two albums.

It wasn't until 1981 that Lloyd moved to break a decade of silence in the jazz world when a remarkable 18-year-old French pianist, Michel Petrucciani, arrived in Big Sur. Lloyd was compelled to help introduce this gifted artist to the world. This led to U.S., European and Japanese tours in 1982 and 1983 with Petrucciani on piano, Palle Danielsson on bass and drummer Son Ship Theus. British jazz critic Brian Case called Lloyd's return "one of the events of the 1980s." The group produced a special edition cassette, *Night Blooming Jasmine*, and two live records, *Montreux '82* and *A Night in Copenhagen*, which also features Bobby McFerrin (reissued by Blue Note Records). Satisfied that Petrucciani was beginning to receive the recognition he deserved, Lloyd again retreated to Big Sur.

In 1986, after being hospitalized with a nearly fatal medical condition, Lloyd rededicated himself to music. When he regained his strength in 1988 he formed a new quartet with the renowned Swedish pianist Bobo Stenson. When Lloyd returned to the Montreux Festival in 1988, Swiss critic Yvan Ischer wrote: "To see and hear Charles Lloyd in concert is always an event, not only because this saxophonist has been at quite a few crossroads, but also because he seems to hold an impalpable truth which makes him a thoroughly original musician...This is what we call grace."

Lloyd made his first recording for ECM Records, “Fish Out of Water” in 1989. The project marked the beginning of a new wave of Lloyd compositions and recordings. ECM's producer, Manfred Eicher, compared the recording to a Giacometti painting, saying, "I really believe this is the refined essence of what music should be. All the meat is gone, only the bones remain." More than twenty years later, he is still with the label, and still in search of the “sound” and the truth. From 1989, Lloyd toured actively and recorded for the ECM label. Noteworthy albums include “Canto”, “Voice In the Night”, “The Water Is Wide”, featuring Brad Mehldau, John Abercrombie, Larry Grenadier and Billy Higgins, *Lift Every Voice*, (featuring Geri Allen), and the live “Rabo de Nube” with Jason Moran.

Charles Lloyd has shown great consistency and creativity in his period with ECM, much of his music containing a strong spiritual and world music element, as can be heard on the duo recording “Which Way Is East” with his longtime friend and musical soul mate, Billy Higgins. “Rabo de Nube”, captured the New Quartet ( Jason Moran, Reuben Rogers, Eric Harland) “live” at its inception, and was voted #1 recording for the 2008 Jazz Times Reader’s and Critic’s Poll. “Mirror”, his second recording with the New Quartet, (2010) has already been called a “ Charles Lloyd classic.”

Lloyd established another “first” in his interesting history of jazz “firsts”, by collaborating with the classical Greek singer, Maria Farantouri for a concert at the Herodion Theater at the foot of the Acropolis. Ta Nea, the leading newspaper of Athens stated “Music has no borders.... The audience was filled with a Dionysian ecstasy. While the music had reminiscences of a Hypiros fair, at the same time it took you to the heart of

New York City.” This concert was documented and the “ATHENS CONCERT” was released by ECM records in 2011.

Charles Lloyd maintains an active performance and recording schedule with the New Quartet, Sangam, Maria Farantouri and special projects around the world. He celebrated his 75th birthday with concerts in the Temple of Dendur at the Metropolitan Museum and the Kennedy Center Concert Hall.

In 2013 Lloyd was commissioned by Jazztopad in Wroclaw Poland to write a new composition to premiere at their festival. The “Wild Man Dance Suite” is a masterpiece composed for a quartet of piano, bass and drums and with the added instrumentation of Hungarian cimbalom and Greek lyra. The recording “Wild Man Dance” was released to great critical acclaim on Blue Note Records in April 2015. “Charles Lloyd & the Marvels, I Long To See You,” features a new group with guitarist, Bill Frisell, Reuben Rogers, bass, Eric Harland, drums and Greg Leisz, on steel guitar. It also has Willie Nelson and Norah Jones as special guests on two tracks. The album was released in January of 2016.

### **Charles Lloyd Selected Discography**

#### **Of Course, Of Course, 1965 COLUMBIA**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone, flute  
Gabor Szabo, guitar  
Ron Carter: double-bass  
Tony Williams: drums

#### **Dream Weaver 1966 ATLANTIC**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone, flute  
Keith Jarrett: piano  
Cecil McBee: double-bass  
Jack DeJohnette: drums

#### **Live at Monterey, Forest Flower 1967 ATLANTIC**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone, flute  
Keith Jarrett: piano  
Cecil McBee: double-bass  
Jack DeJohnette: drums

#### **Fish Out of Water 1990 ECM**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone, flute  
Bobo Stenson: piano  
Palle Danielsson: double-bass  
Jon Christensen: drums

#### **The Call ( 1993 ) All My Relations, (1995) Canto ( 1997) ECM**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone  
Bobo Stenson: piano  
Anders Jormin: double-bass  
Billy Hart: drums

#### **Voice in the Night 1998 ECM**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone  
John Abercrombie: guitar  
Dave Holland: double-bass  
Billy Higgins: drums, percussion

#### **The Water is Wide 2000 ECM**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone  
John Abercrombie: guitar  
Brad Mehldau: piano  
Larry Grenadier : double-bass  
Billy Higgins: drums

#### **Hyperion With Higgins 2001 ECM**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone taragato  
John Abercrombie: guitar  
Brad Mehldau: piano  
Larry Grenadier: double-bass  
Billy Higgins: drums

#### **Lift Every Voice 2002 ECM**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone, alto flute, taragato

Geri Allen: piano  
John Abercrombie: guitar  
Marc Johnson: double bass    Larry Grenadier: double bass  
Billy Hart: drums

**Which Way Is East 2004 ECM**

Charles Lloyd: tenor and alto saxophones, C and alto flutes, taragato, Tibetan oboe, maracas, voice  
Billy Higgins: drums, guimbri, Guinean and Senegalese hand drums, guitar, voice

**Sangam 2006 ECM**

Charles Lloyd: tenor and alto saxophone, alto and bass flute, tarogato, piano  
Zakir Hussain: tablas, percussion, voice  
Eric Harland: drums, percussion, piano

**Rabo de Nube 2008 ECM**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone, alto flute, tarogato,  
Jason Moran, piano  
Reuben Rogers, double bass  
Eric Harland: drums, percussion, piano

**Mirror 2010 ECM**

Charles Lloyd: tenor & alto saxophones, voice  
Jason Moran, piano  
Reuben Rogers, double bass  
Eric Harland: drums, percussion, voice

**ATHENS CONCERT 2011 ECM**

Charles Lloyd: tenor & alto saxophones, voice  
Jason Moran, piano  
Reuben Rogers, double bass  
Eric Harland: drums  
Maria Farantouri, voice  
Socratis Sinopoulos, lyra  
Takis Farazis, piano

**Hagar's Song 2013 ECM**

Charles Lloyd: tenor & alto saxophones, flutes  
Jason Moran, piano

**Wild Man Dance 2015 Blue Note Records**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone  
Gerald Clayton, piano  
Joe Sanders, bass  
Gerald Cleaver, drums  
Sokratis Sinopoulos, lyra  
Miklos Lokacs, cimbalom

**Charles Lloyd & the Marvels    I Long To See You  
2016 Blue Note Records**

Charles Lloyd: tenor saxophone, alto flute  
Bill Frisell, guitar  
Reuben Rogers, double bass  
Eric Harland: drums  
Greg Leisz: steel guitar  
Willie Nelson: vocals, guitar "Last Night I had the Strangest Dream"  
Norah Jones: vocals, "You Are So Beautiful"