



artist bio

CHRIS BOTTI

GRAMMY-winning trumpeter **Chris Botti** has been one of the most popular instrumentalists in the world for nearly three decades; he's collaborated with some of the biggest superstars on the planet, including Sting, Paul Simon, Barbra Streisand, Lady Gaga, Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra, Aretha Franklin, Bette Midler, Joni Mitchell, Steven Tyler, Andrea Bocelli, Herbie Hancock, Yo-Yo Ma, and others; he's topped the jazz charts with numerous albums, earned multiple Gold and Platinum records, performed with symphony orchestras and on prestigious stages from Carnegie Hall to the Hollywood Bowl to the Sydney Opera House.

In short, Chris Botti really needs no introduction. Yet with his **Blue Note Records** debut, he's offering one anyway. **Vol.1** is in many ways a fresh start for the trumpeter. Having successfully crossed over from jazz renown to pop stardom, Botti's first album in more than a decade finds him crossing back, with a small group project focused on acoustic jazz and classic standards.

"I turned 60 in 2022, at a time that seemed like a restart for so many things in the world," Botti says. "I wanted to strip away all the orchestral arrangements and special guests and focus more on my playing, the playing of my band, and these jazz classics that we always love playing on stage."

While Botti could boast of the major names with whom he's shared stages, this project allows him to share his enthusiasm for the jazz greats past and present that excite him – his conversation is peppered with references to everyone from Miles Davis to Keith Jarrett to Pat Metheny to Brad Mehldau. He points to landmark albums like Davis' *Kind of Blue*, *John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman*, or Metheny's duo outing with Charlie Haden, *Beyond the Missouri Sky* as models for the kind of "lifestyle" music he set out to make – music that is exquisite on its own but can also set the scene for a coffee shop or hotel lounge, instantly generating a sophisticated mood.

Of course, Botti couldn't have found a more ideal home for this artistic rebirth. Blue Note has been a standard-bearer of jazz throughout its storied history, and the trumpeter found a receptive partner in label president Don Was. "Anyone that's lucky enough to say they're on Blue Note Records should be pinching themselves," Botti says. "It's a fantastic honor. I had great runs on Verve and Columbia, so it's amazing to now arrive on the most famous traditional jazz record label."

Not that *Vol. 1* is a complete about-face – longtime fans will immediately recognize Botti's glowing tone and regal melodicism, as well as his flair for investing the narrative of a song with high drama and vibrant emotion. "There's a cinematic quality that I like to hear in music, and that I've found that audiences really love," he says. "The essence of that remains on this album."

It's paramount to me that there is incredible beauty and elegance to all of the performances and the way they're recorded."

Botti has assembled a stellar group of collaborators to achieve that blend of beauty and elegance for the album. The album was produced by the legendary **David Foster**, whose staggering list of credits includes three Beatles, Michael Jackson, Barbra Streisand, Michael Bubl , Diana Krall, Mariah Carey, Madonna, Herbie Hancock, Aretha Franklin, Dolly Parton and countless others.

"David commands so much respect from the musicians that he didn't have to say much, but he would navigate the session in a very subtle way," says Botti of the producer, who also contributed the lush, moving piano intro to "**Danny Boy**" that sets the tone for the album.

Botti has enjoyed a long collaboration with pianist **Taylor Eigsti**, while bassist **Zach Moses**, keyboardist **Julian Pollack**, and saxophonist **Chad Lefkowitz-Brown** are all members of his regular touring band. Veteran drummer **Vinnie Colaiuta** rounds out the core band.

They're joined by a number of excellent musicians, including Israeli guitarist **Gilad Hekselman**, whose atmospheric, cascading lines grace the Rodgers & Hart classic "**Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered**"; classical violinist **Joshua Bell**, who brings a striking passion to Botti's stark rendition of "**My Funny Valentine**"; Uruguayan-born guitarist **Leonardo Amuedo**, whose years in Brazil are reflected in his graceful soloing on Henry Mancini's "**Two for the Road**" and the bossa nova feel he brings to "**Time On My Hands**"; pianist **Esteban Castro**, whose delicate restraint belies his youth on "**Old Folks**"; and singer-songwriter **John Splithoff**, who contributes and performs his romantic song "**Paris**."

Above all, it's Botti's clarion, heart wrenching trumpet that seizes the spotlight throughout *Vol. 1*. From the way he sings the yearning melody of "Danny Boy" to the keening, airy melancholy of his Harmon mute playing on Miles Davis' "**Blue In Green**"; the hushed tenderness he brings to Coldplay's "**Fix You**" or his shimmering flurries on "**Someday My Prince Will Come**," Botti leaves no doubt of his mastery or his ability to speak directly from the soul of the instrument.

The title of *Vol. 1* implies a new beginning, but perhaps even more promising is the fact that it also hints at a *Vol. 2* – and beyond. "I'm so looking forward to that possibility," Botti concludes.

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