



6 Imaginary Place, Aberdeen, New Jersey, 07747 Phone: 732-566-2881 Fax: 732-566-8157 email: myles1@optonline.net

**STEFON HARRIS**  
**COMPOSER, VIBRAPHONIST, MARIMBIST**

**“His music needs no labels like ‘postmodern’ or ‘cutting edge’. It is Stefon Harris music, as Charles Mingus, he insisted, was Mingus music.”**

*Nat Hentoff, Jazz Times Magazine*

Vibraphonist-composer Stefon Harris is heralded as **“one of the most important young artists in jazz** (*The Los Angeles Times*).” he is unquestionably developing what will be a long and extraordinary career.

Stefon Harris’ passionate artistry, energetic stage presence, and astonishing virtuosity have propelled him into the forefront of the current jazz scene. Widely recognized and lauded by both his peers and jazz critics alike, the 35-year-old is committed to both exploring the rich potential of jazz composition and blazing new trails on the vibraphone.

A graduate of Manhattan School of Music, Stefon received a B.M. in Classical Music and a M.M. in Jazz Performance. He is a recipient of the prestigious **Martin E. Segal Award** from Lincoln Center and has earned three consecutive **Grammy** nominations including **Best Jazz Album** for *The Grand Unification Theory* (2003) and the 2001 release of *Kindred* (Blue Note) and his 1999 release of *Black Action Figure* (Blue Note) for **Best Jazz Instrumental Solo**. *North Sea Jazz* (Netherlands) named Harris for the prestigious **International 2002 Bird Award** for Artist Deserving Wider Recognition. He has been voted **Best Mallet** player by **2004 Jazz Times Critics Poll**, and by the **Jazz Journalist Association** (2005, 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001 & 2000), **Debut Artist of the Year** by *Jazz Times*, *Chicago Tribune’s Debut of the Year* and *Downbeat’s Critics Poll Winner for Vibraphone and Rising Star, Vibraphone (2006, 2004, 2003)* *Newsweek’s Best Jazz CD*, **Best New Talent** and **1999-2000 Readers Poll Best Vibraphonist** by *Jazziz Magazine*.

Mr. Harris has performed at many of the world’s most distinguished concert halls, including the Carnegie Hall debut of *African Tarantella...Dances with Duke* (2006 Blue Note), Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, The Kennedy Center, San Francisco’s Herbst Theater, UCLA’s Royce Hall, Chicago’s Symphony Center, Detroit’s Orchestra Hall, and The Sydney Opera House. In June 2007, his quartet performed a retrospective of his original compositions with the Jazz Sinfonica Orchestra in Sao Paulo, Brasil. He has toured and recorded with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and performed his original compositions with the Dutch Metropole Orchestra in Den Hague. He has toured South Africa, Brazil and Europe performing at the North Sea Jazz Festival, Istanbul Jazz Festival, and the Umbria Jazz Festival among others. In 2001 he premiered *The Grand Unification Theory* a full length concert piece commissioned by The Troy Savings Bank Music Hall which was later presented at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. He has also appeared at the legendary Playboy Jazz Festival, Montreal Jazz Festival, and the Orange County Performing Arts Center. In March 2005 Mr. Harris debuted *Suite Moments* a special commission from The Wharton Center for Performing Arts, Michigan State University. In May 2006 he premiered *Portraits of The Promised*, commissioned by Fontana Chamber Arts for People’s Church Sesquicentennial Celebration in Kalamazoo, MI which later became the subject of a WGUV-PBS (Grand Rapids, MI) television special. He joined the San Francisco Jazz Collective in 2007 with whom he tours in addition to leading his band Blackout and special projects.

An active educator Mr. Harris conducts clinics and lectures throughout the country. He currently teaches at New York University and is Artist in Residence at Fontana Chamber Arts (Kalamazoo, MI) and University of Nebraska, Lincoln and has held similar posts with San Francisco Performances, The Isabelle Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston and The Monk Institute in Los Angeles. He created a unique interactive program with poets from around the world at the University of Iowa’s famed International Writer’s Workshop. He returned there in September 2004 to participate in “The Life of Discovery” as part of a

statewide celebration of arts and humanities. Harris has served on the **Executive Board of Directors** for Chamber Music America and the **Board of Directors** for WBGO-FM (Newark, NJ) was a Resource Leader for International Association of Jazz Educators.

Named one of the Top Ten CDs in 2006 by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Harris' latest recording, *African Tarantella...Dances with Duke (Blue Note)* brings a modern arrangement of Duke Ellington's "New Orleans Suite" and "Queen Suite" along with selections from Harris' "The Gardner Meditations". The latter suite was part of a commission by The Wharton Center for Performing Arts at Michigan State University. Late summer 2009 Mr. Harris will release the anticipated follow up CD to the acclaimed *Evolution*, the Top Ten recording with his band **Blackout**, a musical hybrid of acoustic and progressive sounds praised for "pursing jazz on it's own terms" (Washington Post). *Evolution* was also named to the 2004 **Jazz Times** Top 50 CDs. The 2003 release of *The Grand Unification Theory* an eleven movement suite featuring latin, classical, African and jazz influences earned a **Grammy** nomination, **JAZZIZ** Critics Choice and 4 star reviews from Downbeat Magazine, Rolling Stone and The Los Angeles Times, His 2001 CD *Kindred* earned him his second **Grammy** nod for **Best Jazz Album**. A quartet recording with the noted pianist Jacky Terrasson *Kindred* is a follow-up to his sophomore release *Black Action Figure* (Blue Note Records), also nominated for a **Grammy** for Best Jazz Instrumental Solo. His premiere as a leader, *A Cloud of Red Dust*, was voted **Best Debut Recording** at the *1999 New York Jazz Awards*. In addition to leading his own band, Mr. Harris has recorded as part of The Classical Jazz Quartet, a series of jazz interpreted classics with Kenny Barron, Ron Carter, and Lewis Nash. He has also recorded and toured with many of music's greatest artists, including Joe Henderson, Wynton Marsalis, David Sanborn, Cassandra Wilson, Buster Williams, Kenny Barron, Charlie Hunter, Kurt Elling, Cyrus Chestnut, Steve Coleman, and Steve Turre among many others.

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