

## LAFAYETTE HARRIS JR. BIO

Known as the “go to” pianist by many other musicians and band leaders, Lafayette has performed with the Duke Ellington Legacy Orchestra, toured for seven years with Max Roach, currently tours Europe and the U.S. with four time Grammy nominee-Ernestine Anderson and has worked with Al Grey, John Gordon, Slide Hampton, Curtis Fuller, Roswell Rudd, Chico Freeman, and Cindy Blackman, Allan Harris, Carla Cook, René Marie and many others.

For the last nine years, Lafayette has been hosting his weekly open mic session at the Lenox Lounge, widely regarded as the “best vocal jam session” in the city by New York’s weekly listing guides, since 2002. Lafayette’s two most recent albums are – **IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT**, a contemporary funk/fusion project, which was released in 2006 and most recently **TRIO TALK**, a jazz trio outing featuring Winard Harper and Dwayne Dolphin. Lafayette has also been featured most recently on Ernestine Anderson’s 2011 release: **NIGHTLIFE**.

As the early part of 2011 Lafayette has been involved in some new creative projects. His own vision led him to explore songs made famous by Billie Holiday and Billy Eckstine in a performance piece called *Billie meets Billy*. He recently was MD for *Jazz Ain’t Dead*, a show featuring dance, hip hop, jazz and funk! And at Dizzy’s he was featured with *Two Skirts and a Shirt* a show featuring the vocals of René Marie, Carla Cook and Mr. Allan Harris.

Moving to New York in September 1985 Lafayette was swept into the intense musical whirlpool of jazz. Working in well-established clubs like the Blue Note, Sweet Basil, and Fat Tuesday’s, the young musician soon garnered a reputation for himself as a name to watch. That reputation earned Lafayette a record deal with Muse Records, resulting in his debut album, aptly titled **Lafayette Is Here**. A second Muse recording, **Happy Together**, starred The Lafayette Harris Trio plus Melba Moore.

By the early 90’s Lafayette had also become a regular on the European jazz festival circuit, playing alongside Slide Hampton and, even introducing the vocalist Barbara Morrison as part of his band. In 1993 his former teacher Kenny Barron referred him to master drummer **Max Roach**. This new relationship resulted in almost 10 years of touring and collaborating with the legendary drummer, prompting Mr. Roach to describe Lafayette as a “phenomenal new voice on the music scene today.”

The mid 90’s saw Lafayette take on his next challenge – Broadway. His breakthrough gig was as a conductor and keyboardist for the smash hit “*Bring In 'Da Noise, Bring In 'Da Funk*.” Harris has since been involved with more Broadway shows including “*The Full Monty*,” and “*The Color Purple*.”

During the “*Bring In 'Da Noise...*” period, Lafayette was invited twice to play at a fundraisers for underprivileged children at the home of the late news anchor, Peter Jennings. The bands included Illinois Jacquet, Percy Heath, Max Roach and Wynton Marsalis, Jimmy Heath, Clark Terry and Harry Edison. Lafayette’s debut release on his own label, Airmen Records, “Lafayette Is Here...Solo” was voted one of the best recordings of 1998 by Cadence Magazine.

From 2003 to the present Lafayette has been back on the jazz scene recording on Ernestine Anderson’s releases **LOVE MAKES THE CHANGES** and **A SONG FOR YOU** and also on Anita O’Day’s final recording date **INDESTRUCTIBLE!** Look for more from him soon.