

## Derrick Gardner Bio

Jazz trumpeter Derrick Gardner - inspired by the finest hard-blowing funky bop bands of the 1960's, is working to extend that great tradition as a composer, arranger, performer, leader and educator.

With extraordinary, creative natural talent, Derrick quickly made his mark when he arrived on the New York jazz scene in 1991. There he began an illustrious career that has taken him around the world performing internationally with the Count Basie Orchestra, (1991-present), Frank Foster's Loud Minority Band, Harry Connick Jr.'s Big Band, The Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra and Swiss tenor player Roman Schwaller's European Sextet. Among his performance locales are Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, Japan, South Africa and Thailand as well as many premiere venues in the United States. Over the last 29 years Derrick has worked with a tremendous litany of artists that include late Dizzy Gillespie, George Benson, Frank Foster, Jon Faddis, Nancy Wilson, Tony Bennett, Joe Williams, Rufus Reid and Clark Terry just to name a few.

Derrick formed his own sextet, The Jazz Prophets, in 1991; it continues to be one of the primary vehicles for his distinctive, hard-driving music. The band's three-man horn line - consisting of himself, tenor sax player Rob Dixon and Derrick's brother, trombonist Vincent Gardner of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, has been together since the beginning. The Jazz Prophets have released three albums to date, and in 2009 they received the Independent Music Award's *Best Jazz Album Of The Year* for their release *Echoes Of Ethnicity*. The Jazz Prophets' albums boil with the long-standing collective's sheer passion for the soulful, funky jazz sound of which Cannonball Adderly and Horace Silver built solid foundations with their 1950's and 60's ensembles.

Throughout the 2000's, Derrick has continued performing and touring with The Jazz Prophets. Additionally, he started his own imprint – *Impact Jazz*, in 2005, and was awarded the *Babs Asper Chair in Jazz Trumpet* at the Desautels Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba. He is currently based out of Winnipeg, where he continues to educate Canada's next generation of rising Jazz musicians.

In 2014, Derrick formed *Derrick Gardner & The Big dig! Band*, an 18-piece ensemble that combines some of North America's top Jazz musicians with members of the local Winnipeg jazz scene, including former students hand-picked by Gardner. Their debut album *Still I Rise*, released in July of 2020, spent thirty weeks on the *JazzWeek Top 50* chart, and placed #3 on Peter Vacher's *Best New Releases of the Year* for *JazzWise Magazine*. Lauded as a "visionary composer", Derrick's soulful, hard-swinging compositions are powerful, uplifting, and at times politically charged.

Derrick has also performed on multiple recordings with the Count Basie Orchestra (including the Grammy-winning *The Count Basie Orchestra Live at Manchester Craftman's Guild*), the New York Voices in 1997 and four sessions with Harry Connick Jr. including 2007's Hurricane Katrina

inspired “Oh, My Nola”. In addition to recording and touring with the Harry Connick Jr. Big Band (an affiliation that continues as his schedule permits) Derrick was the feature trumpet soloist in the Broadway musical *Thou Shalt Not*, for which Connick wrote the music and lyrics. As a sideman, Derrick has been on numerous recordings by arranging mentor and close friend Frank Foster, Carlos Garnett, Stefon Harris, Roman Schwaller and Liz Wright, among others.