

Cyrus

Virtuosic and playful, pianist Cyrus Chestnut's hard swinging, soulful sounds have become a staple in the jazz community. Blending **contemporary jazz, traditional jazz** and **gospel**, plus the occasional seasonings of **Latin** and **samba**, Chestnut gives himself plenty of freedom to explore different emotions, while keeping his music in recognizable form. Add to that his apparent ease on the piano, and you've got a musician who really does know how to put a smile on your face. His "lush chords, playful grace notes, worshipful tremolos and effortless runs up and down the 88s" are sure to impress, but it's his warm demeanor and irresistible sweetness that make him "one of jazz's most beloved ambassadors."

Chestnut has played with many leaders in the music scene including Wynton Marsalis, Freddie Hubbard, Branford Marsalis, Chick Corea, Dizzy Gillespie, Jon Hendricks, and Betty Carter, recording and performing live around the world. An extremely versatile pianist, Chestnut has also collaborated with Vanessa Williams, Brian McKnight, Kathleen Battle, Freddy Cole, Bette Midler, Jimmy Scott, Isaac Hayes, and Kevin Mahogany. His leadership and prowess as a soloist has led him to be a first call for the piano chair in big bands including the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, Dizzy Gillespie Big Band, and Carnegie Hall Jazz Orchestra.

Chestnut's latest album, "**Cyrus Plays Elvis**," is both conceptually audacious and solidly in the pocket: a jazz exploration of songs made famous by the rock n' roll immortal Elvis Presley. From the first note, it's obvious that their shared influences of blues and gospel link these two very different artists at the bedrock level. Chestnut's treatments of these classic tunes run the full range of jazz moods: playful, virtuosic, lyrical and always deeply soulful.

In 2009-2010, Cyrus Chestnut is available:

- ◆ With his trio
- ◆ As a soloist
- ◆ Cyrus Chestnut's "Sanctified Swing"
Jazz goes to church in this high-energy program fusing the traditions of gospel with the traditions of jazz. It's an infectious celebration of praise! Available as a quartet, quintet, or more, depending on budget
- ◆ Cyrus Chestnut Plays "Charlie Brown Christmas"
Utilizing the music from the 2000 Charlie Brown Christmas album; available as a trio or larger group
- ◆ For educational activities

For more information of Cyrus Chestnut, please visit:
www.edkeane.com & www.cyruschestnut.com

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Quotes

"His brand of crisp articulation and blues-inflected harmony evokes another era... multifaceted and dynamic...Mr. Chestnut was the evening's star and he brought charisma to the role..."

The New York Times

"[Chestnut] makes a supremely dynamic commitment to the keyboard: His statements display bold authority, colorful flourish and a kind of defiant conviction. And man, can he swing! Confident, assertive and full-bodied, he displays a clean attack with a built-in rhythmic quality."

Variety

"His playing is robust but tasteful, and he plays ballads with a liquid fluency; his original compositions brim with good cheer...He can take the unlikeliest melodies and make them sound like standards...Highly recommended."

All Music Guide

"Chestnut delights with [a] swinging set of new and old...playful... humorous... impressive..."

The Boston Globe

"Chestnut... knows how to conjure up a spirit of genuine romance. Just listen to the jaunty jazz pianist's reinvention of 'Love Me Tender' on his new CD, *Cyrus Plays Elvis*. It's a great example of how a gifted musician can take a sappy song and set it free. The much-heard melody... rings out with newfound oomph, sounding insistent yet dreamy."

Marc Silver, NPR Music