

Biography

Paul Bollenback: Guitarist/Composer

"Not one jazz virtuoso could put the definition of jazz into words, but all agreed that you know it when you hear it. That's the way it is with Paul Bollenback. It's bona-fide playing, unambiguous, up-front and powerful," summarizes guitar master George Benson, a long-time supporter. Bollenback's debut recording as a leader, *Original Visions*, on Challenge Records, is one of the most creative efforts by a guitarist in recent memory. *Double Gemini*, his second CD, features four of his own compositions and won the title of CD of The Month in Jim Fisch's distinguished jazz column in 20th Century Guitar Magazine. It won the same award from the renowned jazz radio station WBGO in Newark, New Jersey. His 3rd release on Challenge, *Soul Grooves*, won 'Ndigo Magazines "Best Contemporary Jazz Album of 1999". Challenge has since released "Dreams" and "Double-Vision", and Bollenback will release his 6th project as a leader, *Brightness of Being*, on the *Elefant Dreams* label, in February 2006.

Paul Bollenback's emotionally expressive style and eclectic approach is the result of a wide range of influences, including Carlos Santana, Yes, Wes Montgomery, George Benson, Kenny Burrell, Herbie Hancock, Bill Evans, John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, John McLaughlin, Jimi Hendrix, Johnny Winter and Lenny Breau. At the age of seven, he received a nylon-string guitar from his father, a scientist, classically trained trumpeter and lover of music. When Bollenback was eleven, his family relocated from Hastings on Hudson, New York, to New Delhi, India. It was there that he cultivated his life-long interest in exotic musical sounds and timbres, which is evident in even his most jazz-based work. When his family returned to New York, Paul's father bought him an electric guitar and he started to gig in rock and roll bands around the area. Then he heard Miles Davis and his world changed forever.

Having relocated again in 1975, this time from New York to Washington, DC, Bollenback continued to study and play jazz and fusion. He attended University of Miami as a music major, then later studied privately for eight years with Baltimore-based professor of Theory/Composition Asher Zlotnik. In 1987 he made his recording debut on saxophonist Gary Thomas's *Seventh Quadrant*, for Enja records, and in 1990 made the acquaintance of organ legend Joey DeFrancesco, an association that lasted 16 years, and produced 14 recordings.

In 1991 his two compositions, "Wookies's Revenge" and "Romancin' the Moon" (featured on Joey DeFrancesco's *Reboppin'*) earned him the SESAC award for original music. In 1993 while touring in Europe, Paul was awarded a grant from the Virginia Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts to compose and perform "New Music for Three Jazz Guitars". In 1997, Bollenback was named Musician of the Year at the Washington Area Music Awards.

Paul Bollenback has appeared on the Tonight Show, Good Morning America, Joan Rivers, The Today Show, and Entertainment Tonight. He has played with an impressive spectrum of musicians, including Stanley Turrentine, Gary Bartz, Joey DeFrancesco, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Joe Locke, Gary Thomas, Chris McNulty, Tim Garland, David "Fathead" Newman, Steve Wilson, Geoffrey Keezer, Terri-Lyne-Carrington, Grady Tate, , Shunzo Ohno, James Moody, Jack McDuff, Charlie Byrd, Paul Bley, Carol Sloane, , Melissa Walker, Carter Jefferson, Herb Ellis, Jimmy Bruno, and East Meets Jazz, with Sandip Burman.

In 1997 he returned to New York City, which he now makes his home.

www.paulbollenback.com