



# BRAD MEHLDAU

## Biography/Program Notes

2009

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Brad Mehldau – Piano

Larry Grenadier – Bass

Jeff Ballard – Drums

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Jazz pianist Brad Mehldau has recorded and performed extensively since the early 1990s. Mehldau’s most consistent output over the years has taken place in the trio format. Starting in 1996, his group released a series of five records on Warner Bros. entitled *The Art of the Trio*. Mehldau also has a solo piano recording entitled *Elegiac Cycle*, and a record called *Places* that includes both solo piano and trio songs. *Elegiac Cycle* and *Places* might be called “concept” albums. They are made up exclusively of original material and have central themes that hover over the compositions. Other Mehldau recordings include *Largo*, a collaborative effort with the innovative musician and producer Jon Brion, and *Anything Goes*—a trio outing with bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Jorge Rossy.

His first record for Nonesuch, *Brad Mehldau Live in Tokyo*, was released in September 2004. After ten rewarding years with Rossy playing in Mehldau’s regular trio, drummer Jeff Ballard joined the band in 2005. The label released its first album from the Brad Mehldau Trio—*Day is Done*—on September 27, 2005. An exciting double live trio recording entitled *Brad Mehldau Trio Live* was released on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (Nonesuch) to critical acclaim. Early 2009 found Mehldau and producer Jon Brion collaborating in the recording studio once again for the highly anticipated follow-up to *Largo*.

Mehldau’s musical personality forms a dichotomy. He is first and foremost an improviser, and greatly cherishes the surprise and wonder that can occur from a spontaneous musical idea that is expressed directly, in real time. But he also has a deep fascination for the formal architecture of music, and it informs everything he plays. In his most inspired playing, the actual structure of his musical thought serves as an expressive device. As he plays, he listens to how ideas unwind, and

the order in which they reveal themselves. Each tune has a strongly felt narrative arch, whether it expresses itself in a beginning, an end, or something left intentionally open-ended. The two sides of Mehldau's personality—the improviser and the formalist—play off each other, and the effect is often something like controlled chaos.

Mehldau has performed around the world at a steady pace since the mid-1990s, with his trio and as a solo pianist. His performances convey a wide range of expression. There is often an intellectual rigor to the continuous process of abstraction that may take place on a given tune, and a certain density of information. That could be followed by a stripped down, emotionally direct ballad. Mehldau favors juxtaposing extremes. He has attracted a sizeable following over the years, one that has grown to expect a singular, intense experience in his performance.

In addition to his trio and solo projects, Mehldau has worked with a number of great jazz musicians, including a rewarding gig with saxophonist Joshua Redman's band for two years, recordings and concerts with Pat Metheny, Charlie Haden and Lee Konitz, and recording as a sideman with the likes of Michael Brecker, Wayne Shorter, John Scofield, and Charles Lloyd. For more than a decade, he has collaborated with several musicians and peers whom he respects greatly, including the guitarists Peter Bernstein and Kurt Rosenwinkel and tenor saxophonist Mark Turner. Mehldau also has played on a number of recordings outside of the jazz idiom, like Willie Nelson's *Teatro* and singer-songwriter Joe Henry's *Scar*. His music has appeared in several movies, including Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* and Wim Wender's *Million Dollar Hotel*. He also composed an original soundtrack for the French film, *Ma Femme Est Une Actrice*. Mehldau recently composed two new works commissioned by Carnegie Hall for voice and piano, *The Blue Estuaries* and *The Book of Hours: Love Poems to God*, which were performed in the spring of 2005 with the acclaimed classical soprano, Renee Fleming. These songs were recorded with Fleming and released in 2006 on the Love Sublime record; simultaneously, Nonesuch released an album of Mehldau's jazz compositions for trio entitled *House on Hill*. In March 2007 Mehldau debuted the piano concerto "The Brady Bunch Variations for piano and orchestra" at Theatre du Chatelet in Paris with Orchestre national d'Ile-de-France. In early 2008 London's Wigmore Hall announced that Brad Mehldau will curate an annual four-concert jazz series at the prestigious hall during its 2009-10 and 2010-11 seasons, with Mehldau appearing in at least two of the four annual concerts.

**Larry Grenadier (Bass)** attended Stanford University where he received a BA Degree in English Literature. After moving to the East Coast he played Gary Burton Band, touring US and Europe. He moved to New York City and played with Joe Henderson, Betty Carter, Pat Metheny and the John Scofield Group. For the past year when not touring and recording with Brad Mehldau Trio he tours and records with the Pat Metheny Trio.

**Jeff Ballard (Drums, Percussion)** grew up in Santa Cruz, California. Toured with Ray Charles from 1988 – 1990. Moved to New York in 1990. Since then, he has played and recorded with Lou Donaldson, Danilo Perez, Chick Corea, and Joshua Redman to name a few. Currently, as well as being a member of the Brad Melhdau Trio, he is a co-leader of the collective group FLY (feat. Mark Turner, Larry Grenadier, Jeff Ballard), and Joshua Redman's Elastic Band.



# BRAD MEHLDAU

## Discography/Career Highlights

2009

### BRAD MEHLDAU DISCOGRAPHY

#### As Leader

Brad Mehldau Trio Live (Nonesuch Records)  
House On Hill (Nonesuch Records)  
Day Is Done (Nonesuch Records)  
Live in Tokyo (Nonesuch Records)  
Anything Goes (Warner Bros. Records)  
Largo (Warner Bros. Records)  
Progression – Art of the Trio, Volume 5 (Warner Bros. Records 48005)  
Places – (Warner Bros. Records 47693)  
Art of the Trio 4 – Back at the Vanguard (Warner Bros. Records 47463)  
Elegiac Cycle - (Warner Bros. Records 47357)  
Art of the Trio Volume 3 - Songs (Warner Bros. Records 47051)  
Art of the Trio Volume 2 - Live at the Village Vanguard (Warner Bros. Records 46848)  
Art of the Trio Volume 1 (Warner Bros. Records 46260)  
Introducing Brad Mehldau (Warner Bros. Records 45997)

#### As Co-Leader

Quartet (with Pat Metheny) (Nonesuch) 2007  
Metheny Mehldau (Nonesuch) 2006  
Love Sublime (with Renee Fleming) 2006  
Close Enough for Love- Fleurine (EmArcy/Verve) 2000  
NY Barcelona Crossing (Fresh Sound FSNT-031)  
NY Barcelona Crossing #2 (Fresh Sound FSNT-037)  
When I Fall In Love -Mehldau & Rossy Trio (Fresh Sound FSNT-007)

#### As Sideman

Pilgrimage – Michael Brecker (Heads Up/Telarc)  
Timeless Tales - Joshua Redman Quartet (Warner Bros. 47052)  
In This World - Mark Turner (Warner Bros. 47074)  
Teatro - Willie Nelson (Island 314524548)  
Moodswing - Joshua Redman Quartet (Warner Bros. 45643)  
Alone Together - Lee Konitz/Charlie Haden (Blue Note 57150)  
Warner Jams, Volume One (Warner Bros. 45919)  
Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil Soundtrack (Warner Bros. 46829)  
Warner Bros. Jazz Christmas Party (Warner Bros. 46793)  
Something Blue – Lee Konitz/Charlie Haden (Blue Note)  
Young at Heart – Jessie Davis (Concord CCD 45651)  
Downtown Sounds – Grant Stewart (Criss-Cross Jazz 1085)  
Ademuz – Perico Sambert + 10 (EGT 660)  
Somethings Burnin’ – Peter Bernstein (Criss-Cross Jazz 1091)  
Signs of Life – Peter Bernstein (Criss -Cross Jazz 1095)

### Career Highlights:

- **2009 Grammy Nominee – Best Jazz Instrumental** *Brad Mehldau Trio: Live*
- **2008 Edison Award – Jazz International**
- **2008 Top 20 Talents to Watch in 2008 – The Daily Telegraph (UK)**
- **2007 Best Artist: Piano – Downbeat Reader's Poll**
- **2006 Miles Davis Award – Montreal Jazz Fest**
- **2004 Best Artist: Piano - Down Beat Readers Poll**
- **1999 Grammy Nominee – Best Jazz Instrumental** *Art of the Trio 4, Back at the Vanguard*
- **Top 10 Album of 1999 Time Magazine – Elegiac Cycle**
- **"Jazz Pianist of the Year" 1999, 2000 and 2002** *Down Beat Readers Poll*
- **Best Jazz Artist of 1999** *Musica Jazz Critics Poll (Italy)*
- **#1 Talent Deserving of Wider Recognition Acoustic Jazz Piano -** 1997, 1998 & 1999 *Down Beat Critics Poll*
- **#1 Talent Deserving of Wider Recognition Acoustic Jazz Group -** 1998 & 1999 *Down Beat Critics Poll*
- **"Choc" Award 1999** *Le Monde de la Musique - Elegiac Cycle*
- **New Star of 1998 - Swing Journal Disc Award (Japan)**
- **Best Jazz Album of the Year 1998: Songs - Jazzman magazine (France)**
- **Best Foreign Musician of the Year - D'Jango d'Or 98 (France)**
- **The Best CD of 1997 - Academie du Jazz (France)**
- **1997 Grammy Nominee - Best Jazz Instrumental Solo**
- **1997 UPI Top 10 – Art Of The Trio, Vol. 1 - Jazz Album of the Year**
- **Best New Artist of 1997 - Jazz Times Readers Poll**
- **Best New Talent of 1997 - Musica Jazz Critics Poll (Italy)**
- **Debut Artist of the Year 1997 - New York Jazz Awards**

# brad mehdau

"Universally admired as one of the most adventurous pianists to arrive on the jazz scene in years."

-The Los Angeles Times

"Inside the music of Brad Mehldau is a conflict among rock, jazz and classical personalities. Ultimately, though, the pianist has figured a way to integrate all three pretty seamlessly."

-The Philadelphia Enquirer

"The elliptical lines, volatile rhythmic figures and unexpected bursts of color and dissonance... prove that Mehldau writes as cleverly as he plays."

-The Chicago Tribune

"Mehldau achieves an almost spiritual resonance, chords echoing like amens."

-Time Magazine

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