

**CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE BAND**  
**RAISES THE ROOF AT ZELLERBACH HALL**  
**FRIDAY MARCH 25 AT 8:00 P.M.**

**BERKELEY, February 22, 2005** – **Christian McBride** brings his smoking hot band to **Cal Performances** for one electrifying performance on **Friday, March 25** at **8:00 p.m.** This is an opportunity to see one of jazz’s most heralded and innovative young stars along with his charismatic cohorts Ron Blake on saxophone, Geoffrey Keezer on keyboards, and Terreon Gully on drums. They will present an intoxicating blend of jazz, R&B, funk, and moving lyrical beauty. “We like to keep the brain moving, play new things, play new sounds, and hopefully you’ll dig it,” explains Mr. McBride.

**CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE**

The term *whiz kid* could have been coined to describe **Christian McBride**. He was born in Philadelphia in 1972, and—influenced by his bass-playing father and uncle—he started playing electric bass at the age of eight. Two years later he began playing the upright bass and, even though he was also studying classical music at the time, he developed sophisticated jazz chops so quickly that he was able to sit in with local jazz musicians at the age of thirteen. A year later, he caught the attention of Wynton Marsalis, who became his friend and mentor.

McBride graduated from Philadelphia’s High School for the Creative and Performing Arts, and after a summer of touring with the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra in Europe and the fusion group Free Flight in the U.S., he went to New York City to study classical music at Juilliard. However, the opportunity to perform with top-notch jazz groups in NYC proved too much of a temptation, and after a year he dropped out of school to join trumpeter Roy Hargrove’s first band.

An impressive string of achievements followed. In 1990 he gained a coveted berth with trumpeter Freddie Hubbard’s band and also worked with the hottest group of the early nineties, the Benny Green Trio. In 1991, Mr. McBride’s reputation as the up-and-coming jazz bassist was

cemented when the legendary Ray Brown invited him to join SuperBass, a bass trio that Brown conceived of expressly to include Mr. McBride.

As a leader, Mr. McBride has made six CDs, starting with 1994's *Gettin' To It*, an unabashedly straightforward hard-bop effort that won instant critical and commercial success. That and two subsequent recordings labeled him as a staunch jazz traditionalist, but in 1998 he surprised everyone by releasing the funk and R&B-drenched *A Family Affair*. That move effectively told the jazz world, as he stated in an interview, "Hey, look, I'm really not this jazz traditionalist guy you've been making me out to be all of these years."

Doubters need only listen to the subsequent *Sci-Fi* and *Vertical Visions* to see that Mr. McBride and his band are contemporary, cutting-edge innovators. But with tradition underlying it all, Christian McBride joined a handful of innovative bandleaders who have created a fresh sound while reflecting all that came before it.

Christian McBride's talent and eclectic tastes have made him one of the busiest and most sought out session players in jazz and pop circles—his name appears on the credits of over 200 albums by artists as diverse as Chic Corea, Dianna Krall, Sting, Carly Simon, and D'Angelo. He was so busy that for a time it looked as though he wouldn't be able to realize his dream of putting together his own group. Fortunately, Mr. McBride eventually managed to assemble a truly remarkable unit that includes three of today's finest young jazz artists.

The Christian McBride Band is really a *band*, and not just a temporary collection of sidemen. Geoffrey Keezer and Ron Blake have been with McBride since 2000, and Terreon Gully, the newest member, signed on in 2001. Together, the four musicians have been challenging themselves—and their audiences—to honor and carry on the jazz tradition and simultaneously explore a wide range of musical styles. The band's most recent CD, the groundbreaking *Vertical Visions*, is an outstanding realization of Christian McBride's vision: a sizzling compendium of new ideas, multiple styles and virtuosic musicianship.

### **GEOFFREY KEEZER**

Aside from being a fellow whiz kid—**Geoffrey Keezer** started playing the piano at the age of three and joined the Art Blakey group at 17—the master keyboardist has much in common with Christian McBride. He too is a musical polyglot whose career has encompassed a mind-boggling array of projects and genres, involving session work and touring engagements with many of today’s most important artists.

In addition to his straight-ahead jazz recordings and collaborations with contemporary artists like Mulgrew Miller, Chic Corea, Benny Green, and Diana Krall, Mr. Keezer has toured with opera diva Barbara Hendricks, and has penned several public performance pieces including a set of variations for piano and string quartet written especially for the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego. He joined the band in 2000, and Christian McBride refers to him as the band’s “instigator,” the one who “just loves to push things to the limit.”

### **RON BLAKE**

A member of the Christian McBride Band since 2000, the dynamic saxophonist **Ron Blake** is an established and respected musician and bandleader in his own right. Like Mr. McBride and Mr. Keezer, he started early, picking up the guitar at age eight and switching to saxophone after listening to his father’s extensive record collection, which included recordings by the likes of Cannonball Adderley and King Curtis. Born in the Virgin Islands, but educated in the Midwest, Blake studied classical saxophone at Northwestern University after a stellar high school career. An opportunity to jam with Dizzie Gillespie and other jazz greats at a Virgin Islands jazz festival was a turning point in his life; soon after graduating, he immersed himself in the jazz world, first in Chicago and then in New York City.

Ron Blake has performed on scores of recordings as a session player and has released three CDs under his own name, including the critically-acclaimed *21st Century*. He has recorded and shared the stage with many venerable luminaries such as Nancy Wilson, Louis Bellson, Clark Terry, Johnny Griffin, Stanley Turrentine, and Benny Golson. He, like fellow band member Terreon Gully, is a member of the incendiary Latin group, Yerba Buena.

## TERREON GULLY

The immensely energetic and versatile **Terreon “Tank” Gully** is from East St. Louis, Illinois, the birthplace of Miles Davis and Clark Terry. He began his musical career as a child playing drums in church and later played in a high school ensemble under the tutelage of Ron Carter. He received a music degree from the University of Houston, and has subsequently become a fixture on the New York City music scene.

Because Mr. Gully is equally at home drumming jazz, funk, Latin and hip-hop rhythms, he is in great demand. Though a busy sessions player, and a permanent member of the Christian McBride Band since 2001, he has somehow found time to hold down the drummer’s spots in vibraphonist Stefon Harris’s Blackout and the Latin/funk/hip-hop hybrid Yerba Buena.

## TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Christian McBride Band** on **Friday, March 25** at **8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$18.00**, **\$24.00**, and **\$32.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu).

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Friday, March 25 at 8:00 p.m.**

**Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**  
Bancroft Way at Telegraph, Berkeley

*Jazz*

**Christian McBride Band**

**Christian McBride**, bass

**Geoffrey Keezer**, piano

**Ron Blake**, saxophone

**Terreon Gully**, drums

**Program:** Bassist Christian McBride, widely recognized for his talents as a composer, arranger and bandleader as well as virtuoso musician, performs with his band.

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