

Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts Boyer College of Music and Dance

Jazz on Broad Rodney Whitaker, bass

Wednesday, November 15, 2023
Temple Performing Arts Center Lobby

4:30 PM Master Class
7:30 PM Performance

About the Artist

Internationally renowned bassist and Origin Records recording artist, **RODNEY WHITAKER**, currently holds the titles of Professor of Jazz Bass and Director of Jazz Studies at Michigan State University where he has built one of the leading jazz degree programs and performing faculty in the world. He is considered one of the leading performers and teachers of the jazz double bass in the United States. He is also the Artistic Director of the Michigan State University Professors of Jazz, former Artistic Advisor of Jazz @ Wharton Center, Director of Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Civic Jazz Orchestra and a former member of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. Whitaker received his first national recognition performing with the Harrison/Blanchard Quintet.

Building on his Detroit roots and enormous talent, Whitaker went on to earn an international reputation as one of the world's finest jazz double bass performer. He completed seven-year tenure as bassist with Wynton Marsalis' Septet and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. He has toured the world over the last twenty-five years, collaborating and performing with legendary jazz artists such as Jimmy Heath, Eric Reed, Cyrus Chestnut, Vanessa Rubin, Kathleen Battle, Dianne Reeves, Cassandra Wilson, Diana Krall, Jon Faddis, Donald Harrison, Terence Blanchard, Rodney Jones, Wycliffe Gordon, Kenny Burrell, Bob James, Benny Golson, Regina Carter, Pat Metheny, Nicholas Payton, Jimmy Cobb, Joshua Redman, Stephon Harris, Johnny O'Neal, Marcus Belgrave, James Carter, Steve Turre, Claudio Roditi, Junko Onishi, Harry Allen, Ronnie Matthews, Chick Corea, Kenny Garrett, Kevin Mahogany, Ingrid Jensen, Barry Harris, Ron Blake, Jeff Clayton, Dana Hall, Gerald Wilson, Sean Jones, Niki Harris, Wessell Anderson, Don Vappie, Johnny O'Neal, Cedar Walton, Renee Rosnes, Randy Brecker, Rickey Woodard, Bobby Shew, Gary Smulyan, Joe LaBarbera, Randy Napoleon, Peter Martin, Nnenna Freelon, Donald Byrd, Branford Marsalis, Greg Hutchinson, Carl Allen, Herlin Riley, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Terrell Stafford, Tim Warfield, Bruce Barth, Jon Carl Hendricks, Roy Hargrove, the late greats: Dizzy Gillespie, Mulgrew Miller, Tommy Flanagan, John Lewis, Marian McPartland, Donald Walden, Joe Henderson, Hank Jones, Frank Morgan and Betty 'Bebop' Carter as well as performing with leading symphony orchestras world-wide. Whitaker has also toured internationally as a featured performer with the Roy Hargrove Quintet. In addition, he has appeared and presented master classes at the International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE) conferences.

Ninety-fourth and ninety-fifth performances of the 2023-2024 season.



Rodney is one of the hardest working and swinging bass players on the scene and has recorded with great musicians such as Roy Hargrove, Pat Metheny and Wynton Marsalis. Featured on more than 100+ recordings — from film to compact discs — Whitaker's film scores, *China*, directed by Jeff Wray, was released on PBS Fall 2002 and *Malaria and Malawi*, released on PBS Fall 2010. Also, Whitaker has a DVD release featuring Michigan State University's Jazz Department entitled, "Inside Jazz". In 2011, he was nominated for an EMMY for the 'Original Music' category, "Malawi and Malaria: Fighting to Save the Children" produced by Robert Gould and Sue Carter.

A proven and committed jazz educator, Whitaker has presented numerous master classes across the nation at locations such as Duke University, Howard University, University of Iowa, University of Michigan, Barbican in London, the New School (NY), Lincoln Center, and the Detroit International Jazz Festival. In addition, he is a consultant with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in the development of the jazz education department, and has served on the faculties of University of Michigan and Julliard Institute of Jazz.

In 2006, he was nominated for the Juno Award, Canada's equivalent to the Grammy, for his work on "Let Me Tell You About My Day," produced by Alma Records. Whitaker collaborated with musicians Phil Dwyer (musician) and Alan Jones on the album, which was nominated for Traditional Jazz Album of the Year.

Now based in East Lansing, Whitaker continues to serve many of the talented in the state of Michigan. His legacy of teaching promises to be distinguished with former students currently performing with jazz greats such as Wynton Marsalis, Dianne Reeves, Pat Matheny, The Count Basie Orchestra and Stephon Harris.

Whitaker attended Wayne State University, studied with trumpeter Marcus Belgrave, bassists-Stephen Molina, Ralph Armstrong, the late Herbie Williams (trumpeter) and the late Robert Gladstone (bassist).