

Organist Pat Bianchi
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Grammy nominated organist Pat Bianchi, continues to establish himself as one of the foremost organists on the scene today. His command of the instrument, harmonic prowess, rhythmic intensity as well as his sensitivity and versatility are rivaled by few. His most recent release, "A Higher Standard" is further proof of this. When Pat is not leading his own trio, he has the honor of performing with jazz guitar icon Pat Martino and also he continues to perform with NEA Jazz Master, bebop saxophone legend Lou Donaldson.

Bianchi, who comes from a very musical family, began playing organ at the age of 7. Unlike many organists of today, piano was not his first instrument. He would spend many hours at a Farfisa Compact Duo organ that was given to him as a Christmas gift. His grandfathers (Pat Bianchi – Saxophone and Richard Zona – Trumpet) along with his father (Nick Bianchi – Drums) all working musicians, provided a great deal of support and guidance early in his musical development. Recognizing Pat's continuing affinity for music, his parents enrolled him in classical piano study. While still maintaining a strong interest in organ, he was playing some of his first professional gigs by the age of 11, eventually performing with dance bands around his hometown of Rochester, NY (ironically fulfilling the role of the bass with his left hand). This was a skill that would serve him well later in his musical life.

Bianchi's interest shifted in his high school years and he began to focus more on piano, he enrolled in Eastman School of Music's preparatory program for piano and music theory. At the same time was also mentored by numerous musicians in the Rochester jazz scene. Bianchi would still play occasional gigs on organ, this time on a Hammond M100. He had taught himself to play all the bass lines on the pedals since you could not play left hand bass on a spinet organ.

Upon graduating high school, Bianchi continued his studies at Berklee College of Music in Boston and graduated in 1998 with a Bachelors of Music in Jazz Piano Performance. Shortly after graduating *cum laude*, Bianchi secured the position as the house pianist at the famous El Chapultepec club in Denver, CO. The Pec (as it is known to locals) often brought in guest artists giving Pat a chance to play with such greats as Red Holloway, Dakota Staton, Carl Fontana, Javon Jackson, Mark Elf, Bud Shank, Brad Leali, Pete Christlieb, and Conte Candoli. After being at the Pec for 6 nights a week for almost 3 years, Pat became an important fixture on the Denver Jazz Scene.

In time, Bianchi decided to move on from his gig at the The Pec and focus solely on organ. Since then he has never looked back. He made his national debut as an Organist, appearing on two recordings as a member the Denver based organ trio, 3osity. The national release of Art of The Jazz Organ Trio and the subsequent recording Tri-O-City brought Bianchi wider recognition and onto a larger stage as a rising star of the organ.

A brief stint in NYC would soon follow and Bianchi quickly established himself on the competitive New York scene. Legendary saxophonist Lou Donaldson immediately took notice of the young organist. Donaldson would hire him when organist Dr. Lonnie Smith could not make an engagement. Upon the recommendation of saxophonist Javon Jackson, Bianchi was hired by drummer Alvin Queen for a week long engagement in Europe. Pat then worked with Alvin for

almost 2 years. Joining “Queen’s” group not only provided a valuable education for Bianchi, but also helped him establish important friendships and musical relationships that would lead to many opportunities in the future. However, due to personal reasons, Bianchi decided to return to Denver.

Upon resuming his tenure in Denver, Bianchi joined the faculty of the University of Colorado at Boulder Jazz Studies Program teaching piano, theory and ensembles to undergraduate, masters and doctoral students. During this time he recorded his first album as a leader, *East Coast Roots*, which includes Mark Whitfield on guitar and Byron Landham on drums. At the same time, Bianchi began working closely with drummer Ralph Peterson Jr. on collaborative projects including, co-leading The Unity Project (a tribute to organist Larry Young and his album Unity).

Bianchi returned to New York City in June of 2008. Soon after Pat began working more frequently, gaining visibility and new opportunities began to materialize.. He officially joined Lou Donaldson’s quartet in 2009 performing with Lou for almost a year and a half before joining Pat Martino’s working trio in 2011. Bianchi is featured on numerous recordings such as Tim Warfield’s, *Sentimental Journey*, a follow up to Warfield’s recording *One For Shirley* (on which he also appears) as well as guitarist Chuck Loeb’s release, *Plain and Simple*. Bianchi also continued to perform with drummer Ralph Peterson Jr., forging ahead with The Unity Project. Bianchi was featured, recording much of this material on Peterson’s CD *Outer Reaches*. Soon after Bianchi released his second recording as a leader, *Back Home*. This recording features Terrell Stafford, Ralph Peterson Jr, Wayne Escoffery, Carmen Intorre Jr. and Gilad Hekselman.

While still actively performing with both Pat Martino and Lou Donaldson, Bianchi not only continues to collaborate with many well known musicians he also leads a number of different groups including his trio (which is featured on his latest release “A Higher Standard”), as well as a group that frequently tours Europe called the *Unusual Suspects*, this trio features a pianist in place of a guitar. Also Bianchi continues to promote his all star organ group *The Organic Collective*.

Pat shows no signs of slowing down. He is constantly working to push his playing to the next level. Having the great fortune of apprenticing under a number of great masters in Jazz has given him the confidence to spread his wings. Bianchi is definitely the next Organist to make a mark in the world of Jazz!