

# BIOGRAPHY

## CHRIS JENTSCH

*"Chris Jentsch's seven-part homage to his home borough (Brooklyn Suite) is at once grandly orchestral and strikingly personal. The entire band seems to radiate from Jentsch's pensive guitar pulse, blending jazz, classical and rock ideas into a multidimensional reflection of everyday life."*

- Forrest Dylan Bryant, Jazz Times

**Chris Jentsch** is a Brooklyn-based composer, bandleader, and guitarist working primarily in jazz and contemporary improvisational forms. Based in NYC since 1999, his main ensemble is Jentsch Group in its trio, quartet, nonet, or large configuration. He has performed at many leading NYC venues, among them the Cornelia Street Café, Barbès, the World Turning Festival (Medicine Show Theatre), ShapeShifterLab, the Internet Café, Symphony Space, Tea Lounge, The Knitting Factory, The Kitchen, and Greenwich House Music School: The Renee Weiler Concert Hall.

As a composer, he has been the recipient of grants, commissions, or fellowships from the Maelstrom Percussion Ensemble, the Penfield Commission Project, American Composers Forum (3), the Composers Assistance Program of the American Music Center (2), New Music USA, Meet the Composer, New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA)(3), Ucross Foundation (2), The Commission Project, the New Music Collective (2), the Donald Knutson Memorial Faculty Development Fund, and Chamber Music America/ Doris Duke New Jazz Works.

As a bandleader and sideman Jentsch has performed throughout the Northeast and Florida, having worked with such diverse musical personalities as George Russell, John Cage, Maria Schneider, Ira Sullivan, and Chris Wood. He appears as a guitarist on the CD *John Cage - Orchestral Works I* (composer supervised first recordings/Mode Records 41) and is also featured in Scott Yanow's book *The Great Jazz Guitarists* (2013 Hal Leonard). His most recent premiere was at ShapeShifterLab in Brooklyn featuring *Topics in American History*, an hour-long chamber jazz work commissioned by CMA/Doris Duke NEW JAZZ WORKS for his nine piece Jentsch Group No Net, with the CD to be released November 9, 2018 and a video of the performance to come.

He has earned critical acclaim for his performances and CDs. [AllAboutJazz](#) says: "Jentsch is more than just a seasoned musician; he's a composer who can convey his ideas on a grand scale" and in reference to *Brooklyn Suite*, [DownBeat Magazine](#) said that he "...created a contrasted and kaleidoscopic patchwork with marvelous melodies, splendid voicings and a skillful use of dynamics."

Jentsch has released five CDs as a leader: *Media Event*, with his trio (1998); *Miami Suite* (1999), with original works for large jazz ensemble; *Brooklyn Suite* (Fleur de Son Records, 2007), which esteemed jazz critic Howard Mandel describes in the album's liner notes: "*Brooklyn Suite* [is] Chris Jentsch's sublime set of interwoven themes and expansive movements for guitar and orchestra..."; and *Cycles Suite* (Fleur de Son Records, 2009), also featuring the large group. About the premiere for the latter, Will Friedwald observed in the New York Sun that "the interesting thing is that he's using avant-garde techniques, but in a traditional framework..." *Fractured Pop*, a CD/DVD production featuring his jazz quartet was released in 2017.

Jentsch attended the Berklee College of Music and has liberal arts and jazz guitar degrees from Gettysburg College, the New England Conservatory, and the Eastman School of Music. He earned the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Jazz Composition from the University of Miami in 1999 and is published by the University of Northern Colorado Press, Advance Music, Fleur de Son Records, and Blue Schist Music. Learn more at [ChrisJentsch.com](http://ChrisJentsch.com).

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"In its scope and detail and eternally recurring inner logic, *Cycles Suite* may be the *Finnegans Wake* of big-band jazz. ...a moving and elegiac journey through complex emotional terrain."

- Richard Gehr (from the liner notes)

"Chris Jentsch's *Brooklyn Suite* (is) a complex-yet-highly rewarding suite for 18-piece ensemble. Jentsch's ambitiousness pays off with a work that, while at times bordering on the modal and even atonal, ends up overall as an accessible album that will also appeal to crossover audiences due to the guitarist's fondness for the rock music aesthetic."

- Graham L. Flanagan (AllAboutJazz)

"Chris Jentsch's *Brooklyn Suite* was one of last year's most satisfyingly ambitious jazz efforts."

- Richard Gehr (Village Voice)

"*Brooklyn Suite* (is) ...the expression of a refreshingly practical, adept and adaptable artist, one in full command of attractive, original concepts as well as the skill, discipline and insight to create compelling experiences in sound."

- Howard Mandel (from the liner notes)

"Nice guitar work from the leader...the big band writing is tight, conceptually ambitious, packed with monster solos."

- David Adler

"His recent composition *Brooklyn Suite* is an ambitious and important work. It is written...for a large jazz ensemble which functions musically and even texturally like a symphony orchestra. There are various soloists involved but these pieces are not concertos, or merely jazz tunes with improvisations, as much as they are orchestral in nature. Chris' work in this format is very sophisticated and bridges the gap between formal classical music and contemporary jazz. His further exploration and development of this genre is something that I look forward to with interest."

- David Frost (multiple Classical Grammy Award winning producer)

**ChrisJentsch.com**

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