



Mariah Wilkins Artist Management LLC

Ambrose Akinmusire, trumpet
Luis Bonilla, trombone
FLY *featuring* Mark Turner, Jeff Ballard, & Larry Grenadier
Luis Perdomo, piano
Guillermo Klein, composer & piano
Miguel Zenón, alto sax
Mark Turner, tenor sax
Theo Bleckmann, voice (booking only)

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BIOGRAPHY: MARK TURNER

In a career that spans two decades and encompasses a broad array of musical ventures, saxophonist Mark Turner has emerged as a towering presence in the jazz community. With a distinctive, personal tone, singular improvisational skills and an innovative, challenging compositional approach, he's earned a far-reaching reputation as one of jazz's most original and influential musical forces.

A New York Times profile of Turner titled "The Best Jazz Player You've Never Heard" called him "possibly jazz's premier player," noting his reputation amongst his peers and his influential stature in the jazz world

2013 finds Turner entering an exciting new creative phase, with his varied talents showcased on a variety of notable new recording projects. Later this year, he'll release his sixth album as a leader—his first under his own name in a dozen years. He's also featured on new or upcoming releases by pianist Stefano Bollani, guitarist Gilad Hekselman, pianist Baptiste Trotignon and the Billy Hart Quartet, of which Turner's been a member for nearly a decade and with whom he recorded two previous albums. He's also continuing his work as a member of Fly, a collaborative trio with bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Jeff Ballard.

Those projects add to an already expansive body of work that encompasses Turner's own widely acclaimed albums and an assortment of collaborations, along with his prolific work as an in-demand sideman. Turner's diverse discography includes collaborations with many of jazz's leading lights, including Kurt Rosenwinkel, Lee Konitz, James Moody, Dave Holland, Joshua Redman, Delfeayo Marsalis, Brad Mehldau, Reid Anderson, Omer Avital, Diego Barber, David Binney, Brian Blade, Seamus Blake, Chris Cheek, George Colligan, Gary Foster, Jon Gordon, Aaron Goldberg, Ethan Iverson, Jonny King, Ryan Kisor, Guillermo Klein, Matthias Lupri, OAM Trio, Mikkel Ploug, Enrico Rava, Jochen Rueckert, Jaleel Shaw, Edward Simon

and the SF Jazz Collective.

Born in 1965 in Ohio and raised in Southern California, Turner grew up surrounded by music. “There was always a lot of R&B and jazz and soul and gospel going on in the house all the time,” he recalls. “This was in the early ’70s, when the whole integration and civil rights thing had begun to go mainstream, and my mother and stepfather were in the first wave of young black professionals and intellectuals who moved to upper-middle-class white neighborhoods. They and their friends were always going out to see live jazz. I was intrigued by that, and I was intrigued by the whole history of jazz music and African-American culture, as well as the music itself. And my father, who died when I was one and a half, had played saxophone, so maybe I was looking for a connection with him too.”

After starting out on clarinet in elementary school, Turner gravitated towards saxophone in high school, while also exploring his talent for the visual arts. Although he briefly studied design and illustration at Long Beach State University, his passion for jazz ultimately led him to pursue a career in music. Turner’s meticulous, analytical work ethic led him to study and dissect the work of such saxophone giants as John Coltrane, Joe Henderson, Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins, Warne Marsh and Lester Young in the pursuit his own musical voice.

“I really got into it and worked really hard, just trying to figure out who I am,” he says, adding, “That’s how I am with everything. It took a while, and it was kind of an arduous struggle, but it allowed me to figure out what I wanted from music. Even when I was spending my time sounding like other people, I felt like that was part of my path to sounding like myself. The more you spend time with the form and the language, the more your own personality comes out.”

After graduating from Boston’s prestigious Berklee College of Music in 1990, Turner moved to New York, where his rapidly developing talents were quickly recognized. Between 1995 and 2001, he recorded five albums of his own—Yam Yam, Mark Turner, In This World, Ballad Session and Dharma Days—while keeping busy as a sought-after collaborator and sideman.

“It was around 1992 that I began to notice or feel that what I was doing was uniquely mine,” Turner asserts. “It had been two and a half years of struggle, but the summer of 1992 was the period where I was finally able to hear it. Maybe no one else would notice, but that’s where I could see how things were gonna go.”

Despite his growing reputation and influence, Turner intentionally pulled back from working as a leader after 2001’s Dharma Days, focusing much of his energy on parenthood while channeling his creativity into numerous collaborative projects.

“The last record I made was right when our first child was born, and that had a lot to do with me pulling back from being a leader for awhile,” Turner states, explaining, “Being a leader is so intense and you really have to put your whole self into it, and I just felt like I wanted to be there for my kids. When you’re a leader, you’re carrying a lot of weight and responsible for a lot of things that have nothing with music. Being a sideman, you basically just have to worry about being there and doing a good job. But my kids are 10 and 13 now, so it’s a little less demanding and I’ve got more room now to do more things that I feel strongly about.”

Of his forthcoming album, a quartet effort with Avishai Cohen on trumpet, Joe Martin on bass and Marcus Gilmore on drums, Turner notes, “I spent a lot of time on the compositions, which I usually do. The blowing is important, but I don’t think about that when I’m writing. I just write the tune, and then we see if we can improvise on it or not. Some of the new tunes are long and kind of involved, and some of them are kind of my version of being pyrotechnical. I just wanted to explore, and I wanted to be able to go in there with a band that would be flexible and have the craftsmanship and the foundation to play something difficult and still make it sound musical.”

Despite his long-awaited return to recording as a leader, **Lathe of Heaven**, (ECM Records/ 2014) Turner still values his collaborative work and has no plans to cut back on it.

“I would never want to solely be a leader, and if someone handed me the chance to do that, I’d say no,” he says. “I like to interpret other people’s music. I learn from doing that, and it’s a big part of what I’ve become as a musician. In the situations where I’m the leader and writing the music, it’s a combination of everything I’ve heard and everything I’ve done,. The way that I write and the way that I play and the bands that I bring together are all a representation of all of the musical situations that I’ve been in, and I’d never want to give that up.”

With an impressive musical history already under his belt and more on the way, Mark Turner is clearly on the verge of a creative renaissance. As The New York Times noted, “His best work is clearly still ahead of him.”