

# FREDDIE BRYANT

## Biography

**Bookings:** 646-373-7069  
**Website:** [www.freddiebryant.com](http://www.freddiebryant.com)  
**Email:** [freddiebryant@yahoo.com](mailto:freddiebryant@yahoo.com)



Freddie Bryant has been playing the guitar since he was 8 years old. His early training was in classical guitar, but he soon started jazz in junior high school. He kept up the dual studies throughout high school and college developing the different techniques and musical styles separately and fully. The result was a thorough understanding and grasp of each idiom. After college he worked primarily as a jazz guitarist but kept up a steady schedule of classical performances. A few years later he received his Masters degree in classical guitar from the Yale School of Music. It was during this time that the two techniques began to meld together. He began to play Brazilian jazz on the classical guitar, and his compositions for the classical guitar started to show more jazz influence in harmony and even improvisation. He is still a jazz guitarist and a classical guitarist but his music is starting to challenge the traditional labels used by the industry. His talents are now being sought out by artists from diverse backgrounds. For example, he was a member of trumpet great, Tom Harrell's quintet for two years, he plays regularly with the Mingus Orchestra, has recorded a CD of Ray Charles songs with jazz singer Roseanna Vitro, toured with the Klezmer virtuoso clarinetist Giora Feidman and the legend of African music, Salif Keita. Currently he is touring and recording with drummer, Ben Riley's Monk Legacy Septet playing a repertoire of Thelonious Monk compositions exclusively. He is also on the first call list of many singers

and Brazilian musicians because of his sensitive accompanying and his knowledge of Brazilian guitar.

In 2003 his group Kaleidoscope: The String Project was chosen by the U.S. Department of State to be "Jazz Ambassadors" and toured nine countries in the Mid-East and Asia. The tour's theme was "Latin Jazz" and was organized by the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. The String Project features writing for violin and the acoustic guitar and well as a new addition to Freddie's instruments—the 12-string guitar (along with bass and drums). Out of this tour he developed a relationship with the Indian sitarist, Shubhendra Rao. They have performed concerts in India and the U.S. where their two groups play together performing compositions which combine jazz and classical Indian styles. He is a member of the "Jazz Ambassador" group led by percussionist, Annette Aguilar which will tour in the autumn of 2005. February and March see him touring as a solo artist for the State Department Speakers and Specialist Program in Kenya, Tanzania, Swaziland and Malawi, Africa. This is an exciting period of his career characterized by a wide variety of great music. His musical family experience is perhaps the most important aspect of his development as a musician. His mother, Beatrice Rippey a concert and opera singer, performed with his father, pianist, Carroll Hollister. Freddie made his debut with his parents as page turner in New York's historic Town Hall at the age of 6. His mother's repertoire, like his own, was varied. She did not sing jazz but she sang in seven languages and many styles from Negro Spirituals and Broadway show tunes to German Lieder and Russian lullabies. His involvement in music with his parents at this early age gave him an understanding of performance practice as well as an insight into the emotional content of music. One of his most memorable and moving experiences was hearing his mother sing "My Man's Gone Now" from Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess." His father had a long career as an accompanist for singers and violinists including Robert Merrill, Robert McFerrin (Bobby's father), John Charles Thomas and violinist Misha Elman. After his fiftieth anniversary concert at Alice Tully Hall the New York Times called him the "dean of American accompanists." Freddie grew up in New York City and studied classical guitar with Jeff Israel and jazz with Sal Salvador, Gene Bertocini and trombonist, Ed Byrne. Later he studied with jazz guitarist Ted Dunbar. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from Amherst College. His teacher there was classical guitarist Phillip de Fremery who has remained a mentor to this date. He studied with Ben Verdery at the Yale School of Music receiving his Masters degree and winning the Havemeyer scholarship. He has also worked with guitarist/composer Frederic Hand. Over the last twenty years Freddie has been active in New York's jazz scene and has performed with Max Roach, Dr. Lonnie Smith and guitar legend Kenny Burrell. After graduating

high school he led groups under his own name and with pianist Jonny King. His groups have featured such saxophonists as Ralph Moore, David Sanchez, Chris Potter, Don Braden, Steve Wilson and Vincent Herring. Other musicians include trumpeters Randy Brecker and Claudio Roditi, pianists Kevin Hays and Renee Rosnes as well as many others. Currently he is working with his group "Kaleidoscope" and it's off shoots, the Trio and the String Project. He also co-leads two other groups "Trio del Sol" with pianist Misha Piatigorsky and percussionist Gilad and "Maureen Budway and the Freddie Bryant Trio" with the vocalist.

Freddie has five CDs as a leader. His first CD, released only in Japan on Jazz City Spirit Records, entitled **Take Your Dance into Battle** inspired Kenny Burrell to write "Freddie Bryant is a brilliant young guitarist and composer (his) ability as an accompanist, soloist, composer, arranger and leader is first rate. My congratulations to this fine musician and his group." Freddie plays the electric guitar exclusively on this CD. The review in Japan's leading jazz magazine, *Swing Journal* stated, "His wide range of sound is new and outstanding...and the variety of compositions shows an original source of ideas, making this jazz album very unique."

Around the time of his stay at Yale he formed a group called the Brooklyn Rain Forest featuring Randy Brecker, David Sanchez, bassist Dennis Irwin and Brazilian drummer, Portinho. The music was a mixture of original compositions and jazz standards over Brazilian rhythms. This was the first time that he used the classical guitar in a jazz setting on a regular basis.

This led to the development of a new style out of which emerged his next three CDs for the Fresh Sound label. They received rave reviews from musicians as well as critics: "**Brazilian Rosewood** is a brilliant and refreshing blend of jazz and Brazilian music...this CD is a gem" (*The Green Mountain Jazz Messenger*), "**Boogaloo Brasileiro** deserves five stars" (*52ndstreet.com*). About his latest release **Kaleidoscope: Live at Smoke** noted writer, Nina D'Alessandro wrote, "Bryant guides his band through some of the most technically and emotionally dazzling music I've ever heard." These CDs feature his acoustic, nylon-string guitar with a few electric offerings and many original compositions inspired by Brazilian and other world rhythms and styles including Flamenco, Latin and even Middle Eastern. All the music is rooted in a jazz approach that emphasizes spontaneity, improvisation and a sense of swing that is imbued in all of the styles on the CD.

His latest CD, **Trio del Sol**, is co-lead with pianist Misha Piatigorsky and percussionist Gilad and was released in February, 2005 by Twinz Records. Writer Bill Milkowski wrote, "Trio del Sol is further proof that the modern world is indeed becoming a smaller and smaller place...together they create a seamless, organic flow of Brazilian, Middle Eastern and Eastern European sounds mixed with elements of classical, flamenco, funk and jazz on their ambitious self titled debut, achieving a cohesive, pan-cultural aesthetic that has far-reaching appeal beyond any one musical genre." Freddie plays primarily the nylon string guitar on this CD but it also features his first commercial recording on 12 string guitar.

Freddie has also been active as a sideman in the recording studio. He has recorded with Tom Harrell, D.D. Jackson, Kevin Hays, Steve Wilson, Cecilia Smith (vibraphonist), and Roseanna Vitro, Bonnie Strickman, Kate Scott, Arlee Leonard, Fay Claassen and Mathilde Santing, Tessa Souter (vocalists) and others. With all this going on Freddie is still concentrating on his classical playing. He has made a point to maintain a consistent and major investment in his development as a classical guitarist. He has played concerts in schools, churches and libraries as well as in the Frank Colleymore Hall in Barbados and at the Summer Wind Arts Festival in Oklahoma. In 1996 he was honored to be featured in the New Faces concert series at the Tilles Center in Long Island. Composing has always been an important part of his musical life. His CDs have thirty-one original tunes. He has also written music for the classical guitar; his "Suite for Nia Andrea" is published by Kithara editions. Four of his jazz compositions will be published in the forthcoming book, "The Real New Standards" edited by pianist Darrell Grant. In addition to writing for solo guitar and his jazz groups, he has written for a 15 piece jazz orchestra with poetry, dance performances and for film. He was also honored to receive a Copeland Fellowship from Amherst College for composing music (2004).

He rounds out his performing, recording and composing careers by teaching privately and in schools around the world. His clinics and workshops have been presented in sixteen different countries. Every summer he teaches guitar and taijiquan at the Interplay Jazz Camp in Beverly, MA.