

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday 18 July 2023

American Jazz Bassist Christian McBride Awarded Wigmore Medal

Christian McBride, the American jazz bassist, composer, educator and bandleader, was awarded the Wigmore Medal last night (Monday 17 July) during a performance at London's Wigmore Hall. McBride, an Associate Artist at the venue, was presented with the award by Matthew Palmer, Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in London, and Wigmore Hall Director John Gilhooly. The award honours exceptional musicians of international standing who have developed a close relationship with Wigmore Hall.

Matthew Palmer, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in London, said:

"Christian McBride is an extraordinary practitioner of, and representative for, the art of jazz on a global stage. This uniquely American form of music has always defied labels, pushed boundaries, and reflected the incredible diversity of the American people. What makes Christian such a worthy recipient of the Wigmore Medal, beyond his obvious and precocious talent, is how he has worked to promote diversity in the arts and to teach and inspire musicians from all backgrounds. His popularity in the United Kingdom and particularly at Wigmore Hall is a reminder of the power of music to transcend national borders and bring our two countries closer together."

Christian McBride, said:

"Walking into the hallowed space that is Wigmore Hall for the first time in 2013 was a wonder to behold. I was not expecting to eventually develop and maintain a relationship with Wigmore over the next decade. To be officially indoctrinated into a hall that has featured such legendary artists is humbling."

John Gilhooly, Director of Wigmore Hall, said:

"One of the most outstanding musicians working today in any field, Christian McBride has been a vital figure for the jazz community for decades, but his boundless musicality touches music across genres, from R&B to rock & pop, hip hop and classical music. His dynamic, virtuoso performances have captivated audiences worldwide, not least at Wigmore Hall where he has brought in new audiences through his own innovative series of concerts and collaborations with artists from across the musical spectrum. The Wigmore Medal celebrates the great musicians who have become part of the Hall's story, and our award to Christian couldn't be more richly deserved."

A jazz-world luminary, and one of today's most celebrated and versatile musicians, McBride has won eight GRAMMYS® and worked with jazz greats like Herbie Hancock, Diana Krall and Wynton Marsalis as well as pop, hip-hop, soul and classical musicians including Sir Paul McCartney, Celine Dion, Isaac Hayes, Queen Latifah, Kathleen Battle, and James Brown. McBride also works extensively in jazz education and advocacy and has campaigned against racism in the arts.

McBride's first appearance at Wigmore Hall was with saxophonist Joshua Redman in 2013, returning two years later with his Trio and in 2016 for The Christian McBride Jazz Series. He became a Wigmore Hall Associate Artist in 2021 and has collaborated at Wigmore Hall with leading musicians including jazz pianist Chick Corea, operatic soprano Renée Fleming, the composer and double-bassist Edgar

Meyer and the folk duo Rhiannon Giddens and Francesco Turrisi. His next appearance at Wigmore Hall is on Wednesday 17 July, 2024.

McBride joins an illustrious list of Wigmore Medal recipients since the award was inaugurated in 2007, including pianists Angela Hewitt, Brad Mehldau and Mitsuko Uchida, bass-baritone Thomas Quasthoff and the Takács String Quartet.

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For further press information please contact Kenny Morrison at Wigmore Hall on
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High resolution images for press use can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/awj9xq7p57g0916/AADrIFd9wQCG5UDov4HYM0UQa?dl=0>

Notes to Editors

About Wigmore Hall - *The world's greatest chamber music venue* – The Times

Located in the heart of London's West End, Wigmore Hall each year presents more than 500 concerts featuring some 2,500 international artists performing music spanning more than six centuries. It is the UK's largest programme of classical music concerts.

Since it opened in 1901, Wigmore Hall has been home to the world's most sought-after soloists and chamber musicians as well as a launch pad for the most exciting young artists. Renowned for its intimate, crystalline acoustic and beautiful interior, complete with an Arts and Crafts cupola above the stage, the Hall has a capacity of 552 seats and draws in more than 5 million annual digital visitors globally with its free high-definition streamed concerts and broadcast partnership with BBC Radio 3. Under the direction of John Gilhooly CBE since 2005, Wigmore Hall also hosts a biennial International Song Competition and a triennial International String Quartet Competition, attracting exceptionally talented young musicians from around the world.

Wigmore Hall's celebrated Learning programme presents an additional 500 events a year. They include family concerts at the Hall for audiences as young as babies aged one and under, as well as external events in collaboration with community, health, social care and education organisations to engage people of all ages who face barriers to participating in creative arts activity. A range of special ticket schemes, including £5 tickets for under 35s, have brought tens of thousands of new young audiences to the Hall since the end of the coronavirus pandemic.

About Christian McBride

Eight-time Grammy®-winning jazz bassist Christian McBride can be likened to a force of nature, fusing the fire and fury of a virtuoso with the depth and grounding of a seasoned journeyman. Powered by a relentless energy and a boundless love of swing, McBride's path has described a continuous positive arc since his arrival on the scene. With a career now blazing into its third decade, the Philadelphia native has become one of the most requested, most recorded, and most respected figures in the music world today. Raised in Philadelphia, a city steeped in soul, McBride moved to New York in 1989 to pursue classical studies at the Juilliard School. There he was promptly recruited to the road by saxophonist Bobby Watson. Call it a change in curriculum: a decade's worth of study through hundreds of recording sessions and countless gigs with an ever-expanding circle of musicians. He was finding his voice, and others were learning to listen for it. He is also a respected educator and advocate, first noted in 1997 when he spoke on former President Bill Clinton's town hall meeting "Racism in the Performing Arts."

About the Wigmore Medal

The Wigmore Medal was inaugurated in 2007 and awards exceptional musicians of international standing who have a close relationship with Wigmore Hall. The first recipient was German baritone Matthias Goerne.

Complete list of Wigmore Medal Winners

- 2007: Matthias Goerne, baritone
- 2008: Sir András Schiff, pianist
- 2010: Dame Felicity Lott, soprano
- 2011: Thomas Quasthoff, bass-baritone
- 2011: Menahem Pressler, pianist
- 2013: Graham Johnson, pianist
- 2014: Takács Quartet, string quartet
- 2015: Brad Mehldau, pianist
- 2016: Christian Gerhaher, baritone
- 2016: Ann Murray DBE, mezzo-soprano
- 2016: Trevor Pinnock, harpsichordist and conductor
- 2017: Steven Isserlis, cellist
- 2019: Iestyn Davies, countertenor
- 2020: Angela Hewitt, pianist
- 2021: Mitsuko Uchida, pianist
- 2022: Mahan Esfahani, harpsichordist
- 2023: Christian McBride, bassist and bandleader