

Geoff Gascoyne - Biography

Geoff Gascoyne was born in Nottingham, England, on November 23rd 1963. He was attracted to music at an early age, starting with the piano at the age of 6. Formal Classical training lead him to the passing of the Grade 8 examination at the age of only 13. Soon after that, his love of the popular music of the day and the need for musicians in local groups encouraged him to take up the electric bass.

In 1978 he moved to London to study painting at St Martins School of Art. Throughout this period he was still committed to playing music and shortly before he left in 1981 he joined his first professional group. This began a period of learning and intense musical experiences for Geoff, he became a freelance musician for the first time. By 1988 his natural curiosity and self-motivating attitude had lead him to begin studying jazz music.

In 1990 he joined the group 'Everything But The Girl'. This association lasted for 3 years and included tours of the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, and the recording of the album 'Worldwide' in 1991. There was also another world tour in 1994 with the award winning 'Hip Hop-Jazz-Rap'group, 'US3'. This took him to South America for the first time.

Geoff's early jazz work was playing electric bass in the groups lead by Jim Mullen and Ian Shaw, amongst others and it was in 1993 that, together with guitarist Malcolm MacFarlane he founded his first group 'Wabash.' This was a very creative period in his life. It was at this time that he started playing the acoustic bass as well as focusing on composing and arranging for the first time. It was during a gig in Germany with Jim Mullen that he met Georgie Fame, an association that continues today. Geoff joined his group in 1995 and later that year, through Georgie, got to perform with the great Van Morrison on a short tour of the UK.

It was also in 1995 that he recorded his first album as a leader, the widely acclaimed 'Voices of Spring. It featured 10 of London's finest musicians and singers and demonstrated Geoff's achievements on the electric and acoustic bass. With countless appearances at Ronnie Scott's Club and many recording sessions under his belt, he became a well-respected name within the London jazz community. He also began teaching privately and as a guest tutor at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

In 1996 he joined Guy Barker's International Group and began to concentrate more on playing the acoustic bass. Highlights of that year included albums with, James McMillan, Moses Molelekwa, Mike Flowers Pops, Ian Shaw and the Opera singer Sally Burgess with whom he performed for Prince Charles at Highgrove.

Geoff recorded his second CD as a bandleader in 1997, Winter Wonderland is a duet album of Christmas melodies with pianist Peter Churchill. Other recordings in that year included Ed Jones Quintet, Georgie Fame Live at Ronnie Scotts, Ian Shaw (for which he also designed the CD cover) and Guy Barker's album, 'What Love Is' which featured guest vocalist, Sting and a 26 piece string orchestra.

1998 began with a European tour with Bill Bruford's 'Earthworks', some recording with Lisa Stansfield for a movie soundtrack / album and he was involved in the development of a new 'Rockschool' syllabus, graded examinations in rock, pop and jazz. There were also concerts with The Britten Sinfonia, Georgie Fame's Birthday Big Band and tours with Ed Jones Quartet and Guy Barker's International Quintet.

In 1999 Geoff formed his new Quartet but was also involved with many more diverse projects. An appearance in a Hollywood Movie, Anthony Mingella's 'The Talented Mr Ripley' which starred Matt Damon and Gwyneth Paltrow. There was also his participation in the West End show entitled 'Lenny' which was directed by Sir Peter Hall and starred comedian Eddie Izzard. Concert highlights were with Dianne Reeves, Ben Sidran, Norma Winstone and Guy Barker with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra as well as a night of Smooth Jazz with Dave Koz and Peter White. Geoff also arranged music for albums by Trudy Kerr, Georgie Fame, Ian Shaw and Cedar Walton.

The year 2000 started with a European tour to promote the Hollywood movie 'The Talented Mr Ripley' and concerts with Georgie Fame and Sally Burgess. March was a good time for recording, 2 new albums which Geoff arranged music for, Trudy Kerr's 'Daydream' (with the great pianist Mulgrew Miller) and Georgie Fame's 'Relationships'. Geoff also began working with the great opera star, Willard White. In the summer there was a tour of Spain with Guy Barker, concerts with Norma Winstone, Ed Jones Quartet and more touring with Georgie Fame. The year ended with many film and TV recordings and some deputising in the west end show 'The Lion King',

In March 2001 Geoff's 3rd CD for Jazzzit Records was released. Autumn his first dedicated quartet album, it received rave reviews from the press and marked the start of a new phase for Geoff as a bandleader. Geoff began devoting more time to his own music playing regularly at London's Ronnie Scotts and composing and arranging new music. The new Quartet with Geoff, Ben Castle, Gareth Williams and Sebastiaan De Krom played its second week at London's Ronnie Scott's in July 2001 and then went into the studio to record Geoff's 4th CD Songs of the Summer for Jazzzit records.

Geoff got married to Australian singer, Trudy Kerr in January 2002 in Brisbane, Australia. In March/ April Geoff took his quartet on his first 'Jazz Services Tour' of the UK and then played Ronnie Scott's opposite the great Elvin Jones in May. Geoff is currently working with Claire Martin, Willard White, Georgie Fame and has helped to produce the debut CD by talented young singer Jamie Cullum for Candid Records.