



RENAUD GARCIA-FONS was born in 1962 near Paris to parents from the Catalonia region of northeastern Spain, and was introduced to music at age five, taking up the piano and classical guitar. As a young man, he studied the double bass at the Paris Conservatory of Music, performing in its orchestras and refining his knowledge of music theory and performance.

He also became the private student of François Rabbath, and through him gained a profound knowledge of the double bass as well as an introduction to the Syrian roots of Rabbath's compositions; and as a member of *Le Big Band Roger Guerin*, he performed side-by-side with some of the most renowned of jazz drummers, including Kenny Clarke and Sam Woodyard.

By age 21, Renaud had won performance competitions held by the cities of Paris and Aubervilliers, and was awarded a diploma by the French Cultural Minister as Professor of Double Bass.

From this point forward, he began to work independently, allowing his adventurous spirit to liberate him from the technical limitations of his instrument in favor of greater freedom to improvise, and to explore music at the crossroads of jazz, traditional, and contemporary music.

Ten years into this journey, he decided to add a fifth string to his bass, enabling possibilities well beyond the idea of the bass as an accompanying instrument, particularly the option to be one of an ensemble's improvising voices. Combining this innovation with his *con arco* and *pizzicato* techniques, he reached an unprecedented level of performance, and became known as the "Paganini of the double bass."

As a member of the *Orchestre des Contrebasses* and later of the *Orchestre National de Jazz* directed by Claude Barthélemy, his knowledge of jazz and improvisation deepened, and brought him into direct contact with many leading European and American jazz musicians. The art of improvisation became a central element in his artistic vision.

There are multiple sources for his musical inspiration – he feels as close to the Flamenco tradition, which he has transposed for the double bass, as to the music of the Mediterranean and Orient. This has led him to collaborations with Pedro Soler, Vicente Pradal, and Carmen Linares, as well as Angélique Ionatos (Greece), Cheb Mami (Algeria), Dhafer Youssef (Tunisia), Huong Tanh (Vietnam), and Kudsi Ergüner (Turkey).

For several years he has enjoyed a fruitful relationship with Matthias Winckelmann, the producer and founder of the German label *Enja Records*, and has released seven recordings: *Légendes*, *Alboréa*, *Oriental*

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Bass, Fuera (with accordionist Jean-Louis Martinier), *Navigatore* (for 20 musicians), *Entremundo* (for trio) and, most recently, *Arcoluz*, a live DVD-CD recording of a trio concert given in Schloss Elmau, Germany.

Renaud has led a variety of ensembles including the *Oriental Bass* band, *Navigatore 5tet* and *8tet*, and has given solo concerts whose title is *Pilgrim*. Over the past three years, he's performed most frequently with his trio, consisting of guitarist Antonio Ruiz and percussionist Pascal Rollando.

In addition to leading his own groups, Renaud collaborates with other artists. On September 11th in 2002, he performed with Claire Antonini, a Persian Târ player, at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art in a special event sponsored by UNESCO in commemoration of the World Trade Center tragedy of 2001.

He is a member of the trio led by the Vietnamese-French guitarist Nguyễn Lê, and recently broadened his collaborative work to include a duo with French guitarist Sylvain Luc; a trio with flamenco guitarist Gerardo Nunez and percussionist Cepillo; and a quartet focused on Indian music with Anindo Chatterjee (tablas), Ken Zuckerman (sarod), and Keyvan Chemirani (zarb).

In parallel with his career as a performer, Renaud has worked as a composer, fulfilling commissions as well as his desire to broaden the repertoire of his performing ensembles.

At the *Scene Nationale de Sceaux* in October 2004, he presented *World Chamber Music*, a piece for string quartet, double bass, and two instruments of Eastern origin: the *bansuri*, a flute prominent in northern Indian music; and the *riq*, a small tambourine equipped with cymbals that is played in all Arab music.

A commission for the anniversary of the *Entente Franco-Ecossaise* offered another opportunity to bring together artists of different worlds. For this occasion Renaud composed a piece in five movements for his trio and seven soloists from the *Scottish Chamber Orchestra*. Tutti orchestral sequences alternate with more intimate orchestrations, giving individual chamber orchestra members an opportunity to join the trio in improvisation. Renaud and the *Orchestra* gave the work's premiere in late October 2004 and, the following month, performed it in France at the *Festival de la Côte d'Opale* and at the *Grand Théâtre de Dijon*.

In 2007, *Opera de Lyon* gave Renaud *carte blanche* to program five evenings of concerts. He chose to perform solo, in two different duos with Sylvain Luc and Claire Antonini, in trio, and in quartet with accordionist David Venitucci, previewing repertoire from his next recording, *Linea del Sur*.

Later that year, Renaud returned to the U.S. with trio performances in California, then began 2008 with the European premiere of Paquito D'Rivera's concerto for clarinet, bass, and symphony orchestra in Spain's Canary Islands, a composition written in tribute to Cuban bassist Cachao.

The summer of 2008 brought Renaud's first visit to Canada, where the trio performed in jazz festivals across the country -- including Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, Montréal, and Québec -- and his first appearance at the North Sea Jazz Festival. In January 2009, Enja Records will release *Linea del Sur*, Renaud's eighth recording for the label, featuring accordionist David Venitucci, guitarist Kiko Ruiz, percussionist Pascal Rollando, and special guest vocalist, Esperanza Fernandez.

www.renaudgarciafons.com

Management in North America
MICHAEL GROFSOREAN / MUSICA EXTRAORDINARIA
734.668.1526
mgrofsorean@comcast.net