

Heather Bennett
Pianist/Vocalist/Composer/Band Leader

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Biography

Jazz pianist/composer Heather Bennett is awaiting the 2005 release of her fifth recording as a leader. "Reflections on Red," produced by *Apria Records*, is a mix of acoustic and electric sounds showcasing Ms. Bennett's original music. Her new lineup of musicians includes: Donny McCaslin on flutes and saxophones; Pete McCann on guitar; Mike Pope on bass; and Ari Hoenig on drums. In addition to her acoustic piano playing, this recording features Ms. Bennett on rhodes electric piano, B-3 organ and voice.

Ms. Bennett released "Suite Talk" on *Apria Records* in 2003. This recording has made the top 50 in *Jazz Week*. This recording features saxophonist, Rick Margitza, trumpeter, Bill Mobley, bassist Rufus Reid and drummer Billy Hart. The album, produced by George Schuller, features all original material including two of Bennett's jazz suites.

Ms. Bennett, born in Buffalo, NY, raised in Needham, MA and Dallas, TX, comes from a rich musical background (her mother is an accomplished classical pianist). Heather began formally studying the piano at the age of seven. She continued her musical studies at Richland College in Dallas, then the University of North Texas and followed her mentor Bert Ligon, to the *University of South Carolina* where she graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with a major in jazz performance.

As a fixture on the Austin, TX, scene during the mid-90s, Ms. Bennett released two self-produced CDs: the first, "New Light" (1996), consists entirely of her own compositions. Her second CD, "Throwing Sparks" (1997), features an all woman trio of Texas personnel.

In 1997, Ms. Bennett moved to New York City to become part of a large community of prominent jazz musicians. She also continued her studies privately with *Richie Beirach* and later *Sal Mosca*. In 1998, she organized an all female quintet of New Yorkers with Houston bassist Erin Wright which debuted at the *Sumarts Jazz Festival* in Houston, recorded, then toured all over Texas.

Her premiere New York release is *All Through The Night* (2000), with drummer Billy Hart, bassist Dennis Irwin, and alto saxophonist Dave Pietro. Interspersed between Bennett's originals are a combination of tunes from Cyndi Lauper's "All Through the Night" to the American classic "When It's Sleepy Time Down South."

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Heather has performed with her own groups at jazz clubs in New York City and surrounding areas (Ryles in Boston, Cleopatra's Needle, Up Over Jazz Café, Smith's, Detour, Metropolitan Café, Pumpkins, etc. in New York, Ortliebs in Philadelphia and more). Ms. Bennett recently performed solo piano concerts in Germany for the *Off New York* festival: the tour was kicked off at New York's *Imagine* Festival, 2004. In addition to these appearances, Ms. Bennett, with Billy Hart and Dennis Irwin, was featured for the *Melon Jazz Festival* in Philadelphia, and she has done numerous Texas tours featuring her music mainly in the cities of Austin, Houston, San Antonio and Dallas.

Ms. Bennett is currently performing with Bill Mobley's *Space Time Big Band*, *Elephunk* (a nine piece jazz/funk band), *Mujeres Latinas* (an all female Salsa band) singing and playing jazz standards with her trio, playing Gospel music in church and freelancing with several jazz, R&B, and pop projects. She also teaches piano, vocals and jazz improvisation in New York City schools through *144 Music and Arts*.

She has performed and/or recorded with Billy Hart, Rufus Reid, Dennis Irwin, Will Lee, Dave Pietro, Roseanna Vitro, Randy Brecker, Ingrid Jensen, Greg Tardy, Ed Schuller, Rick Margitza, Joe Cohn, Danny Walsh, Daniel Carter, Pamela Hart, Ratzo Harris, Jaz Sawyer, George Schuller, Ari Hoenig, Mike Pope, Bill Mobley, Pete McCann, and Donny McCaslin among others. Last year she had the opportunity to play and sing for Liza Minelli. In 2004 she opened with *Mujeres Latinas* for Ray Barretto.

For more information on this artist, please visit www.apriarecords.com. To receive your copy of *Reflections in Red*, to schedule an interview or for a complete appearance schedule, please contact Cheryl Hughey, *Apria Records*, at 314-429-3450 or cherylhughey@apriarecords.com.

***HEATHER BENNETT:
Jazz Pianist/Composer/Vocalist***



“...one of the most promising bop-and-beyond players of the younger generation...”

– *Will Friedwald, Village Voice*

“...Heather Bennett continues her rise to prominence as an accomplished jazz pianist...”

– *All About Jazz*

“...a dozen original pieces (including two jazz suites) reveal Heather’s formidable talent as a composer...”-Review of Bennett’s album “SuiteTalk”

– *Bob Bernotas, host of “Just Jazz,” WDVR-FM*

“...with a definite knowledge of tradition, her compositions impressively present an intelligent path from the present to the future of Jazz...”

- *The Bunker, Bielefeld, Germany*

“...Bennett plays powerfully, with improvisational finesse...”

- *Dortmunder Rundschau 21 Sept 2004 (German Paper).*