

MICHEL NIRENBERG



"In terms of style, substance, and execution, Nirenberg ranks high. This is some brilliant Brazilian jazz." – Dan Bilawski, *All About Jazz*

"Here is a player who uses virtuosity not for self-aggrandizement but to glorify the music...And there is not a dull moment on this album from the guitars to the bass and, of course, the drums and percussion."

– Raul da Gama, *Latin Jazz Network*

"Michel Nirenberg set out on this debut recording to build bridges between Brazilian contemporary music and American jazz. The bridge he's built will stand the test of time and bear repeated crossing. Exquisite execution and virtuoso performances underpin a well-curated selection of music." – Ken Avis, *Baltimore Jazz Alliance*

Saxophonist and composer Michel Nirenberg is building bridges between the classical and popular he grew up playing in Brazil and the jazz music he explored more deeply in the U.S. His compositions celebrate roots common to both hemispheres where African and European influences help create rich and inviting sounds.

A native of Rio de Janeiro, Nirenberg has been carving out a niche in the Washington, DC jazz scene since coming to the States in 2012. He has played prestigious venues such as Atlas Performing Arts Center, Gala Hispanic Theatre, The Carlyle Club, Twins Jazz, and the Brazilian Embassy. In 2015, he began performing in other U.S. cities and giving presentations on Brazilian music and culture. He made his acting debut in a Women's Voices Theater Festival musical, *Give Me A Band, Give Me a Banana! The Carmen Miranda Story*, performing saxophone and seven-string guitar.

Nirenberg was making a name for himself in Brazil, performing in festivals and winning competitions throughout the country while earning a bachelor's degree in music. He was at the top of his class at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). In 2014, he graduated with a master's degree in music performance/saxophone from James Madison University in Virginia. Long before graduation, he was playing with top performers in both countries.

Raised in a musical family, he began studying violin with his grandfather at age six. Becoming a musician was a natural path for him to take. His father plays viola in the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra based in Rio and teaches chamber music at UFRJ. His mother is a gifted pianist. His paternal grandfather, Jaques Nirenberg, was a respected violinist with the Brazilian String Quartet, performing in concert halls around the world. Nirenberg studied classical piano, violin, guitar and clarinet before taking up the saxophone at age 15.

Nirenberg's musical style is contemporary Brazilian instrumental music. His latest album shows a fascinating range of Brazilian influences, going far beyond the basic samba and bossa nova that American audiences have grown to love. At last we can enjoy the same mood elevating choro, forro and maracatu rhythms heard in Brazil. While Nirenberg's classical is impeccable, he demonstrates a strong jazz sensibility and his poignant ballad show a surprising sensitivity for one so young.

His first recording as a leader was *Retrato/Portrait*. Released on the Carioca Music label in 2015, it quickly rose to the top of the CMJ Charts for radio. It boasts virtuoso Brazilian musicians bassist Leonardo Lucini, drummer Alejandro Lucini and venerated guitarist Rogerio Souza. Argentine guitarist Dani Cortaza and American pianist Alex Brown complete the roster of international musicians on the album. What lies ahead? Nirenberg has written new works in classical, jazz and Brazilian styles for small ensembles and big bands.

