

John Goldsby Biography

Since 1994, John Goldsby has been a member of the **Westdeutscher Rundfunk Big Band (also known as the WDR Big Band or the Cologne Radio Big Band)**. From 1980 to 1994, Goldsby lived in New York City and was a fixture on the jazz scene there. He continues to contribute to the art form as a bassist, bandleader, composer, teacher, clinician and author.

The son of a Baptist minister, John was born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky. He played piano, guitar, and electric bass before taking up the double bass at age 18. His early musical experiences include work with hometown jazz greats Jimmy Raney, Helen Humes, and Jamey Aebersold. In 1979, John got a gig with the house trio at a jazz club in Louisville that brought in famous jazz soloists to play with the trio. For almost one year, John played with some of the legends of jazz including: Jay McShann, Buddy Tate, Johnny Hartman, Barney Kessel, Tom Harrell, Dave Liebman, Buddy DeFranco, and others. When this gig ended, John knew he had to relocate to New York. In 1980, he put his bass in the car and made his move.

After moving to New York, John found himself in good company with all of the other young players on the scene. His first experiences with the established New York elite included gigs with Albert Dailey, Sal Nestico, John Hicks, Benny Bailey and Bob Wilber. During his years in New York, Goldsby recorded with many world-class musicians, including Scott Hamilton, Randy Sandke, Michael Brecker, Mel Lewis, Toshiko Akyoshi, John Lewis, and the American Jazz Orchestra.

Goldsby's recordings as a bandleader include *The Innkeeper's Gun*, *Space for the Bass*, *The Visit*, and *Live at the Nachbar* [all Bass Lion]. *The Innkeeper's Gun* and *Live at the Nachbar* feature a powerful sax-bass-drums trio with Jacob Duncan and Jason Tiemann. *The Visit* is a duo recording with pianist Bill Dobbins. The John Goldsby, Peter Erskine, Bill Dobbins Trio are featured on the acclaimed album *Cologne* [Fuzzy Music].

The WDR Big Band records constantly and is featured on many stellar releases, such as: the Grammy-Award-Winning *Avant Gershwin and For Ella*, from Patti Austin; Joe Lovano *Symphonica*; Abdullah Ibrahim *Bombella*; Maceo Parker *Roots and Grooves*; *Big Band Time* from Paquito D'Rivera (featuring John's burning duet "Basstronaut" with electric bassist Oscar Stagnaro); *The Latin Jazz Suite, Esperanto, The Jazz Mass, Jazz Goes To The Movies, Gillespiana, Bullit* and *Mannix* from Lalo Schifrin; *Pussy Cat Dues* with Bill Dobbins, Kevin Mahogany, Charles McPherson, Jimmy Knepper, Dennis Mackrel; "Better Get Hit In Your Soul" with Bill Dobbins, Jack Walrath, Miles Griffith; Eddie Harris *The Last Concert*, and *Prism - The Music of Bill Dobbins and Peter Erskine*; *Rediscovered* Ellington with Rich DeRosa, Garry Dial and Dick Oatts; Vince Mendoza *Homecoming*; Billy Hart *The Broader Picture*; *Soleando* with Chano Dominguez and Vince Mendoza; *Djangology* with Birelli Lagrene; and many more.

Goldsby is busy with recording projects as a sideman, like the recent albums with tenor saxophonist Paul Heller: *Special Edition 1*, (featuring John Engels and Michael Abene) and *Special Edition 2* (with Al Foster and Olaf Polziehn), and the recent release from Saxophonist Karolina Strassmayer and drummer Drori Mondlak, *Joining Forces. Waltz for Worms, Frisky* and *Live at Le Pirat* are recent releases with trumpeter John Marshall. Goldsby recently recorded *Confluence* with Andy Hunter and Johan Horlen, and *The Busker* with longtime musical partner Jacob Duncan.

Feed the Birds, The Shimmering Colours of Stained Glass, and The Underwater Poet with pianist Hubert Nuss, *Ups and Downs* with trombonist Ludwig Nuss, and guitarist Joachim Schoenacker's *Blunatic* are among other noteworthy recordings

which feature John. *Behind Closed Doors* with Peter Erskine, *The Chase* with Randy Sandke, *An Ellington Affair* with Bill Mays, *Big Man's Blues* with Andy Fusco, *Double Exposure* with Ken Peplowski, and *The Return of the Great Guitars* (Herb Ellis, Larry Coryell, Mundell Lowe, and Charlie Byrd) are among other classic recordings. Three critically acclaimed records with the Frank Vignola Trio are *Appel Direct*, *Let It Happen*, *Look Right, Jog Left* and *Off Broadway*.

In 2000, John Goldsby recorded *Viewpoint*, which presents a combination of original material and standards, featuring some of the best musicians on the European scene today: Frank Chastenier, Hans Dekker, Olivier Peters, John Marshall, and Hayden Chisholm.

Tale of the Fingers is the premier recording of the John Goldsby Quartet from 1993. The other musicians on this Concord Jazz CD are Bill Mays (piano), Terry Clarke (drums), and Andy Fusco (alto). This recording features two compositions by Mr. Goldsby as well as rare works by Charles Mingus, Duke Ellington, Oscar Pettiford, Paul Chambers, and Sam Jones. A highlight of the recording is the classic-meets-jazz masterwork "Three Short Stories for Bass and Piano" by Bill Mays.

Other notable performances include "The Tonight Show" with Claude Bolling and Hubert Laws, the Grammy-Award winning soundtrack for "The Cotton Club," and work with Wynton Marsalis, Gunther Schuller, Lionel Hampton, and the Smithsonian Masterworks Orchestra. Goldsby has performed at the JVC Jazz Festival, the Chicago Jazz Festival, and the Odessa Jazz Festival among others in addition to tours of Europe, Japan, Canada, and the United States.

John Goldsby is well-known as a jazz educator and currently a guest lecturer at the Conservatorium Maasticht, NL. Germany. He has also taught at the Folkwang Universität in Essen, the Cologne Musik Hochschule, William Paterson College, Long Island University, and Columbia University. He has given jazz workshops all over the world, most recently in Sligo, Ireland, London, UNT Tampa, North Texas State, and Graz, Austria. Goldsby has taught at Jamey Aebersold's Summer Jazz Clinics since 1980, and he has recorded many educational jazz records for Mr. Aebersold.

The Upright Bass Handbook is Goldsby's video bass course from Truefire.com. With 49 video lessons, notation and text, the course is geared towards beginning double bassists, and electric bassists looking to add the double bass to their skill set.

The Jazz Bass Book is Mr. Goldsby's most recent book, documenting jazz bass players and their techniques from a historical perspective. This first-of-its-kind work is filled with transcriptions, historical and technical information, discography, and Goldsby's insightful and inspiring writing. A play-along CD is included for the reader and student to use with written etudes, patterns, scales, and improvised solos and bass lines. Also on the CD are several performance tracks for listening or play-along. The CD features Goldsby on bass along with the masterful assistance of Bill Dobbins (piano) and Hans Dekker drums).

Mr. Goldsby has written two other instructional method books, *Bowing Techniques for the Improvising Bassist* and *Bass Notes*. Bass Player magazine says, *Bass Notes* is an excellent resource for intermediate to advanced jazz bassist." The National Association of Jazz Educators says, *Bowing Techniques* should be a required publication for upright bassists!" Goldsby is a disciple and master of the Paul Chambers school of jazz bass playing, and spent many years perfecting his own style of arco (bowed) jazz playing. Through private study with Dave Holland and Michael Moore throughout the '80s, Goldsby codified and honed the techniques of arco jazz. Goldsby perceived a gap in jazz bass pedagogy in the area of arco technique, and

published his first book *Jazz Bowing Techniques for the Improvising Bassist* in 1990.

Since 1990, John Goldsby has been a featured writer for Bass Player Magazine with his columns "The Tradition," "Mastering Jazz," and "Jazz Concepts." Goldsby has also written for *Double Bassist Magazine*, *The Strad*, and the *International Society of Bassists Journal* (ISB).

In 2009, Goldsby was awarded the *International Society of Bassists Special Recognition Award for Scholarship*, a biennial award recognizing players and scholars who contribute their special talents, knowledge and support to furthering ISB ideals. Goldsby received jazz performance grants from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1988, 1990, and 1993. The "John Goldsby Plays Oscar Pettiford" concert, which was funded by the 1990 grant received much critical acclaim from the New York Times, Jazz Times, and the Village Voice.

John Goldsby is currently working with the **WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk) Big Band** on projects with artists such as McCoy Tyner, Joyce, Nicholas Payton, Dick Oatts, Francesco Cafiso, Clarke Terry, Gary Bartz, Eddie Henderson, Phil Woods, Mike Manieri, Jon Faddis, Alex Acuna, Paquito D'Rivera, Jack Walrath, Bernard Purdie, Gil Goldstein, Ray Brown, Christian McBride, John Clayton, Peter Erskine, Jeff Hamilton, John Riley, Dennis Mackrel and arrangers such as Rich DeRosa, John Clayton, Maria Schneider, Pedro Giraud, James Darcy Argue, Vince Mendoza, Bob Brookmeyer, Bill Dobbins and Michael Abene (who is currently the main conductor).

Goldsby is an inquisitive scholar, constantly studying, documenting, and codifying jazz bass styles, techniques and players. He seeks to understand the aesthetic foundations and structural development of jazz bass playing in order to define the state of the art. Goldsby heartily endorses trumpeter Clarke Terry's educational maxim: "Imitate, emulate, innovate."

The WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk) is the television and radio station in the Nordrhein-Westphalia area of Germany. It is run as a "public" radio station, but with a much broader scope than the PBS in the United States. In addition to the Big Band, the WDR also employs two full-time symphony orchestras and a choir. John was born Dec 10, 1958 and currently resides in Germany, near Cologne, with his wife Robin and their two children.