

George ROBERT

Born on September 15, 1960 in Chambésy (Geneva), Switzerland, George Robert is internationally recognized as one of the leading alto saxophonists in jazz today.

He started piano at a very early age and at age 10 he began clarinet lessons at the Geneva Conservatory with Luc Hoffmann. In 1980 he moved to Boston and studied alto saxophone with Joe Viola at the Berklee College of Music. In 1984 he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Composition & Arranging and moved to New York where he enrolled at the Manhattan School of Music. He studied with Bob Mintzer and earned a Master's Degree in Jazz Performance in 1987. He played lead alto in the Manhattan School of Music Big Band for 2 years, which earned in 1985 the 1st Prize in the College Big Band Category in the Down Beat Magazine Jazz Awards

In July 1984 he performed on the main stage of the Montreux Jazz Festival and earned an Outstanding Performance Award from Down Beat Magazine. In 1985 & 1986 he toured Europe extensively.

In 1987 he met Tom Harrell and together they founded the *George Robert-Tom Harrell Quintet* (with Dado Moroni, Reggie Johnson & Bill Goodwin). The group completed 125 concerts worldwide between 1987 & 1992, and recorded 5 albums. He remained in New York City and free-lanced for 7 years, playing with Billy Hart, Buster Williams, the Lionel Hampton Big Band, the Toshiko Akiyoshi-Lew Tabackin Jazz Orchestra, Joe Lovano, and many others.

He met Clark Terry and started touring with him extensively, completing a 16-week, 65-concert world tour in 1991. Leonard Feather heard the band perform at Catalina's in Los Angeles and added the musicians' biographies to the next issue of the Jazz Encyclopedia. That same year he moved to Vancouver and lived there for 4 years. In 1993 he recorded with the Metropole Orchestra.

In 1994 he performed at all Canadian jazz festivals with Dado Moroni, Oliver Gannon, Reggie Johnson & George Ursan.

In 1995 George was hired as Director of the Swiss Jazz School in Berne, the oldest independent jazz school in Europe.

In 1997 George recorded a duo album with his long-time teammate pianist Dado Moroni, entitled « Youngbloods » (MONS Records). The album was voted as one of the top 5 jazz albums of 1997 by the critics of Jazz Times. In 1998 he played lead alto in the Phil Woods Big Band which performed at 18 leading European jazz festivals. In 2000 he toured Europe with Phil Woods, Kenny Barron, Rufus Reid & Alvin Queen. In 2002 he was featured soloist with the Chick Corea Trio & the Verbier Festival Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Bobby McFerrin.

In 2003 he authored « The Music of George Robert », published by Advance Music and he founded the Swiss Jazz Orchestra in Berne.

In 2006 he moved to Lausanne and founded the Jazz Department at the Lausanne Music University (HEMU). He has been Director of the HEMU Jazz Department ever since.

George Robert's international performing & recording career is extremely rich and diverse. He has appeared with (in alphabetical order) Toshiko Akiyoshi, Franco Ambrosetti, Jay Anderson, Victor Bailey, Jeff Ballard, Kenny Barron, Jerry Bergonzi, Randy Brecker, Ray Brown, Jeff Clayton, John Clayton, Jimmy Cobb, Billy Cobham, Francis Coletta, Phil Collins, Chick Corea, Jesse Davis, Jon Davis, Alan Dawson, Duduka DeFonseca, Joey DeFrancesco, Niels Lan Doky, Paquito D'Rivera, Billy Drummond, Ray Drummond, Bobby Durham, Isla Eckinger, Jon Faddis, Ricky Ford, Paolo Fresu, Larry Fuller, Hal Galper, Oliver Gannon, Steve Gilmore, Benny Golson, Bill Goodwin, Benny Green, Larry Grenadier, Johnny Griffin, George Gruntz, Charlie Haden, Wolfgang Haffner, Jeff Hamilton, Lionel Hampton, Slide Hampton, Tom Harrell, Billy Hart, Kevin Hayes, Louis Hayes, Jimmy Heath, Fred Hersch, Billy Higgins, Daniel Humair, Plas Johnson, Reggie Johnson, Hank Jones, Ryan Kisor, Lee Konitz, Diana Krall, Byron Landham, John Lewis, Victor Lewis, Dave Liebman, the Pepe Lienhard Big Band, Didier Lockwood, Joe Lovano, Romero Lubambo, Jesper Lundgaard, Russell Malone, Phil Markowitz, Nilson Matta, Cecil McBee, Ron McClure, Bobby McFerrin, Jim McNeely, the Metropole Orchestra, Bob Mintzer, James Moody, Dado Moroni, Mark Murphy, Lewis Nash, Phil Nimmons, Adam Nussbaum, Sandy Patton, Nicolas Payton, Andrea Pozza, Alvin Queen, Rufus Reid, Alex Riel, John Riley, Claudio Roditi, Renee Rosnes, Wallace Roney, Arturo Sandoval, Bud Shank, Peter Schmidlin, Bobby Shew, Klaus Suonsaari, the Swiss Jazz Orchestra, the Swiss Jazz School Big Band, Lew Tabackin, Clark Terry, Toots Thielemans, Mel Torme, Steve Turre, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, the Verbier Festival Symphony Orchestra, Kenny Washington, Peter Washington, Frank Wess, Buster Williams, Jimmy Woode, Phil Woods, among others.

As Dan Morgenstern wrote : « With the recent passing of Benny Carter, it is reassuring to know that the tradition of the alto saxophone is in such good hands. »