

# John Esposito – Pianist/Composer

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John is described as "...one of the strongest jazz pianists on the planet, an under recognized giant" by Bruce Lee Gallanter - Downtown Music Gallery

Michael G. Nastos in the All Music Guide describes John Esposito as playing "...lucid, forward thinking, rhythmically propelling ideas...he succeeds on many real and important levels in creating some of the finest new modern jazz you may hear in the post Wynton Marsalis era...A bold conception and execution to be sure....from a brilliant player who deserves wider attention."

John Szwed in the Village Voice describes John's playing as having, "the lustrous clarity of a gamelan band using repetition so brilliantly that crystalline forms accrue from it."

John Esposito is an American pianist/composer/drummer/producer who works on a wide array of creative music projects. His technical skills and the range of his artistic palette extend across the stylistic boundaries of the Stride Piano, Swing, Bebop, Modal and Free Music movements. He has performed and recorded with artists including Nick Brignola, Dave Douglas, Dave Holland, Carter Jefferson, Franklin Kiermyer, Joe Lovano, J.R. Monterose, David "Fathead" Newman, Eric Person, Arthur Rhames, Sam Rivers, Roswell Rudd, Pharaoh Sanders and John Stubblefield.

John is the owner/executive producer of Sunjump Records. He has created music for theater, dance, film, TV commercials, and multimedia performance art. He is a music faculty member and Artist-In-Residence at Bard College and resides in New York State's Hudson Valley.

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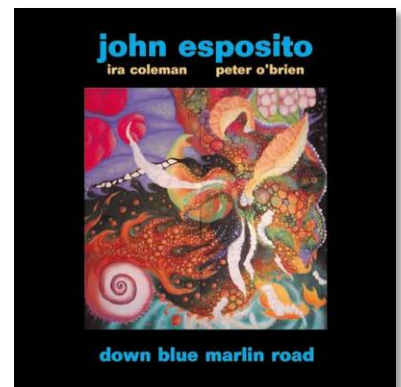
After attending SUNY Albany John worked as house pianist at the Gemini Jazz cafe for several years leading his own group with guest soloists including Nick Brignola and John Stubblefield and spent a year working in saxophonist J.R. Monterose's band.

He moved to New York City in 1980 and met the phenomenal, young saxophonist/pianist/guitarist Arthur Rhames while playing on guitarist Steve Geraci's Beat City label record date *Aliqae Song* with John Stubblefield and Rashied Ali. John worked in the Arthur Rhames Quartet for the next five years.

In 1985, John formed *Second Sight* – a quintet with trumpeter Dave Douglas, saxophonist Jeff Marx, and drummer Jeff Siegel They recorded *Flying With The Comet* in 1986, an album of John's original compositions released on John's independent label Sunjump Records followed by *Tiger Tracks* (1987). This five year period marked the beginning of John's work as a producer and in addition to Second Sight's music, Sunjump released a Jose Chalas record, *Living On Avenue F* and Marc Wagon's, *Shadowlines*.

Throughout the eighties John also worked with saxophonists Carter Jefferson, John Stubblefield, J.R. Monterose, Hugh Brodie, Greg Abate, Nick Brignola, Bobby Johnson Jr; Roswell Rudd, Beaver Harris, and many others.

In 1987 John moved to Woodstock, NY and in 1989 formed the FM Artists Coalition with saxophonist Erica Lindsay and bassist Anthony Cox. The group lasted three years beginning with a series of monthly house concerts, continuing with two years of co-productions with the Woodstock Guild in the Kleinert/James Gallery, culminating in August 1992 in a three day Jazz, Poetry and Visual Arts Festival at the Byrdcliff Barn. John produced 25 concerts for the FM Coalition and the 160 artists presented included Karl Berger, Tim Berne, Cindy Blackman, Baikida Carrol, Dave Douglas Tiny Bell Trio, Marilyn Crispell, Santi DeBriano, Jack DeJohnette, Dave Holland, Howard Johnson, and Wadada Leo Smith.



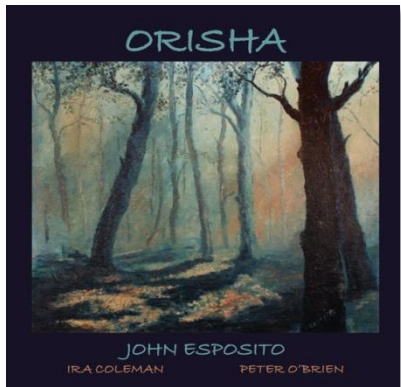
[Link to Down Blue Marlin Road](#)

From 1990-92 John played regularly with the Glen Richmond trio at Fat Tuesday NYC, and solo piano at the Village Corner, Bradley's, NYC and the United Nations Building.

Beginning in 1993 John began working with the groups of Franklin Kiermyer and Eric Person as pianist and arranger. He recorded four albums with Kiermyer : *In The House Of My Fathers* (1993 Konnex) with Dave Douglas and John Stubblefield ; the critically acclaimed *Solomon's Daughter* (1994 Evidence) with tenor saxophonist Pharoah Sanders and bassist Drew Gress; *Kairos* (1996 Evidence) with the saxophonists Sam Rivers, Eric Person, Michael Stuart; and *Sanctification* (1999 Sunship) with saxophonist Michael Stuart and bassist Fima Ephron.

Gigs included Sweet Basil, NYC with Joe Lovano, Eric Person and Drew Gress; tours of the US including the San Francisco Jazz Festival at Yoshi's in Oakland, California; the Panasonic Jazz Festival at the Knitting Factory, NYC; Lincoln Center, NYC; a ten concert tour of Canadian Jazz Festivals including Montreal, Quebec, Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver. John also played on four albums with Eric Person's Meta Four beginning in 1996 with Eric's *More Tales to Tell* (Soulnote) with Dave Holland and Gene Jackson.

Gigs included NYC club appearances at the Blue Note, the Knitting Factory, and Visiones; tours of Jazz festivals and clubs including the Montreal Jazz Festival; Fresno CA Billy Higgins Festival; Savannah Jazz Festival; Texaco Jazz Festival, NYC; Newport/Friehoffer Jazz Festival Saratoga Springs, NY; Detroit Ford/Montreux Festival; Newport Jazz Festival, NYC ; and the Bell/Atlantic Festival, NYC. Media performances included NPR broadcast of the Detroit Montreux concert on Branford Marsalis' Jazz Set.



[Link to Orisha](#)

John appeared on three more Eric Person CDs: *Extra Pressure* (2000) ; *Live At Big Sur* (2003); and *Reflections* (2006) with Dave Douglas and Kenny Davis. John toured with Eric Person's Meta Four in performances at the Guimaraes Jazz Festival, Portugal; the Blue Note, NYC; Big Sur Jazz Festival; Blues Alley, Washington, D.C.; Savannah Jazz Festival, GA; Jazz Factory, Louisville, KY; the Brooklyn Academy of Music; dozens of clubs and concerts and workshops at twenty colleges across the US. Featured media performances include a Knitting Factory concert

and interview on BET Jazz and webcasts from the Bluenote and the Knitting Factory.

In 2002 John renewed his collaboration with saxophonist Jeff Marx on two CDs: *The Great Unknown* (Naugual) and *Treading Air...Breathing Fire* (Soluna). John continued his work with Jeff Marx contributing four compositions to Jeff Marx/Jeff Siegel CD *Dreamstuff* (2005 Ayler Records) and playing piano and writing compositions for Esposito/Marx/Siegel *Inyo* (Sunjump 2009).

In 2006 John revitalized Sunjump Records which had been inactive since 1988 releasing John Esposito *Down Blue Marlin Road*, a deconstruction/reconstruction of some of Jazz's most over-played standards. The second was a quintet date of nine Esposito originals, *The Blue People*. He followed this in 2008 with John Esposito *A Book Of Five Rings* ; Sangeeta Michael Berardi *Earthship*; and re-released Second Sight *Flying With The Comet*, on CD with three bonus tracks.

In 2009 John produced three releases: Steve Geraci's *Aliqae Song*, an archival recording of that first meeting with Arthur Rhames in 1980; the previously mentioned *Inyo* ; and Mitch Kessler's *Erratica*.

During this period John began experimenting with music/video duet improvisations with video artist/photographer Laura Steele, culminating in a concert at University of Chapel Hill, NC. In April 2009 John presented a multimedia concert with Laura Steele at Bard College, Annandale-On-Hudson, NY which combined through-composed and freely

improvised music with Steele's real time video mixing using prerecorded images and live video feeds projected on four walls. Audience seating was configured in various geometric shapes throughout the space. The septet was divided into three segments placed in different parts of the hall.

John produced two Sunjump Records releases in 2010: flutist Jayna Nelson's *Bloom Of Creation*; and *Orisha*, his second trio CD with nine new originals.

2011 brought the release of Mitch Kessler's *Der Erlkonig*. Other recording projects in 2011 include the Esposito/Marx/Siegel trio CD *Tahrir* (release date March 2012) and the mixing/mastering of Sangeeta Michael Berardi's *Calling Coltrane* (release date January 2012).



A current undertaking is a collaboration with Sangeeta Michael Berardi on the music for a record date featured in the upcoming film *Playing With Parkinson's* by the noted Jazz documentary film maker Burrill Crohn. This documentary film of Berardi's life's work as a painter/poet/musician is undergoing the editing process. The CD tentatively titled *Mr P*, is scheduled for a summer 2012 Sunjump release.

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## **John Esposito Trio: *Down Blue Marlin Road***

"... A virtuoso feat of recomposition as well as performance... jazz purified to the essence."  
Kyle Gann - Village Voice

" Esposito and his trio has taken the jazz cover a step beyond, creating something unique and personal in the process, and seem to be having fun doing it.....The interplay is effortless, and satisfyingly dynamic." M.R. Smith - Roll

" a virtuosity seldom heard in players interpreting jazz standards. A bold conception and execution to be sure.....this recording is hopefully one of many to come from a brilliant player who deserves wider attention." (Critic's Rating 3 1/2 stars) Michael G. Nastos, All Music Guide

" both familiar and foreign at the same time....this release is a real pleasure, and one I'll keep going back to." Stuart Kremsky - Cadence

## **John Esposito Trio: *Orisha***

“..a wonderful collection of originals...that are joyous and jumpin'....the trio move through uptempo and midtempo without hesitation. It's a lovely introspective listen that is emotionally effective.... a stellar collection of high spirited originals....rolled up into just over an hour of marvelous listening.” - Vern JazzWrap

“.... a superior example of modernistic swing, Esposito making melodic fills shimmer in the midst of a sweeping hurricane of rhythm....mixes rollicking stride piano with ethereal impressionism....Its restless energy refuses to reside into the background and the dramatic ebb and flow of the music speaks of three artists for whom art is created in the here-and-now.....this Eastern philosophy of yin and yang that is translated beautifully into a work of art that is as progressive as it is nostalgic and as aggressive as it is tender.”  
Jakob Baekgaard allaboutjazz.com

[John's YouTube Video Site](#)

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## **Ira Coleman, Bass**

Ira Coleman was born on April 29th, 1956 in Stockholm, Sweden. He was raised in France until 1968 and thereafter lived in Germany for fourteen years. He studied bass at Germany's "Hochschule für Musik, Köln" from 1980 to 1982. Thereafter, he moved to the US to attend Berklee College of Music in Boston and graduated in 1985.

Ira Coleman currently resides in Rhinebeck, New York and has performed with Sting, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Jessye Norman, Milt Jackson, Freddie Hubbard, Grover Washington Jr., Barbara Hendricks, Branford Marsalis, Betty Carter, Kathleen Battle, Tony Williams, Baaba Maal, Michel LeGrand, Billy Taylor, Cab Calloway, Clark Terry, Billy Cobham, Monty Alexander, Bobby Hutcherson, Hank Jones, Ernest Ranglin, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Art Farmer, Jon Faddis, Benny Golson, Jon Hendricks, Nat Adderley, Jackie McLean, Mulgrew Miller, Billy Pierce, Barney Wilen, Kenny Barron, Franco Ambrosetti, Wallace Roney, Geri Allen, Joe Chambers, Joanne Brackeen, Charles Mc Pherson, Tom Harrell, Arthur Taylor, Randy Brecker, Roy Haynes, Jacky Terrasson, The Carnegie Hall Jazz Ensemble, and The Duke Ellington Orchestra under the direction of Mercer Ellington.

Ira Coleman was the musical director for Ernest Ranglin's Ska Ensemble from 1996-1999 and was Dee Dee Bridgewater's MD from 2002-2008. Ira Coleman has branched out to collaborate with musicians from various musical backgrounds, to arrange and produce. He has performed and recorded with a variety of African musicians. He has recorded with such leading artists as Baba Maal, Oumou Sangaré, Angélique Kidjo and Toumani Diabaté. He produced guitarist Ernest Ranglin's highly acclaimed album "In Search of the Lost Riddim" recorded in Senegal.

In 2009, Ira was invited to participate in the recording of Sting's "If on a Winter's Night". Since then he has performed with Sting in the US and in Europe.

Ira Coleman has performed in the following countries: Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, The Czech Republic, Denmark, Dubai, England, Estonia, Finland, France, The French Antilles, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Russia, Scotland, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tatarstan, Thailand, Trinidad, Turkey, Ukraine and Vietnam. Mr. Coleman has toured in Europe, South East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand for the French Cultural Association (Alliance Française).

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### **Peter O'Brien, Drums**

Born in Flushing, Queens, NY, drummer Peter O'Brien inherited his musical talents from his father, drummer Bill O'Brien, with whom he began his formal studies of the drums at age five. A prodigy, Peter was accepted into his grammar school orchestra at the age of seven and played alongside seventh and eighth grade students. This experience led to a musical scholarship in high school and five years of formal study with Charlie Perry.

In 1976, at age 16, Peter attended a drum clinic held by Perry at Hofstra University where he studied with Jack DeJohnette, whose interest in Peter led to a recommendation and referrals to John Abercrombie, Bill Connors and Miroslav Vitous. After graduating high school, Peter immediately became active on the New York City jazz scene. There he garnered the attention of drummers Jo Jones Jr., Al Foster, Jimmy Lovelace, and Michael Carvin. Peter later studied with Carvin from 1978-79.

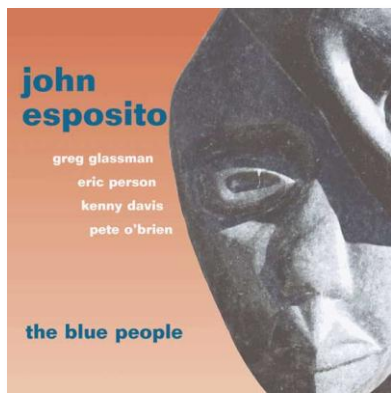
In 1982, Peter toured the USA with organist Brother Jack McDuff and, from 1984-1985, performed all over the USA and Canada with the Edgar Winter Band. The band featured the legendary singer Jerry LaCroix (the original lead singer for White Trash) playing the jazz-inflected fusion material from Edgar's first ground-breaking record "Entrance," as well as his rock and blues music. During this time, Peter also performed several dates with Roy Buchanan, including a sold-out show at the Beacon Theatre with Johnny Winter, Buddy Guy, and Junior Wells. From 1986-1987, he toured Europe with Mark McMillan.

Peter moved to Woodstock, NY in early 1988 and became a member of John Hall's band Orleans. The notoriety created by their hits, "Still The One," "Dance With Me" created a big demand for Peter on the pop music scene. Peter appeared on seven CD's (four with Orleans, three with John Hall), did three tours of Japan (two with Orleans, one with Hall), and numerous USA tours and dates (including Woodstock '94). He was the subject of a feature article published in Modern Drummer's Rhythm and News (Japan). Peter toured with Orleans until 2004.

Peter joined saxophonist Eric Person's Meta-Four in 2001. On Peter's first gig, the quartet recorded *Live at Big Sur (Distinction Records)* at the 7th Annual Big Sur Jazz Festival to a sell-out crowd. The band had its NYC premiere at the Blue Note in January 2003 and Peter remained with the band for two CDs and three national tours. Peter O'Brien is also a member of pianist John Esposito's Trio along with bassist Ira Coleman and since 2003 has recorded on a number of other Sunjump Records projects. In addition to his busy performance schedule, O'Brien is an Adjunct Faculty member at Bard College, NY and freelances as a studio session player.

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## John Esposito Quintet : *The Blue People*



[The Blue People CD](#)

“ These nine tracks, all Esposito originals, play like a history of jazz, recalling the brilliance of some of the genre's greatest groups.” DJ Wavy Davy - Roll

“ The future and the past coalesced into a moment of improvisation.....Esposito's compositions maintain an originality which rises out of both intellectual and emotional knowledge of Jazz and its history. It's blue music played inside out. ” Jakob Baekgaard - allaboutjazz.com

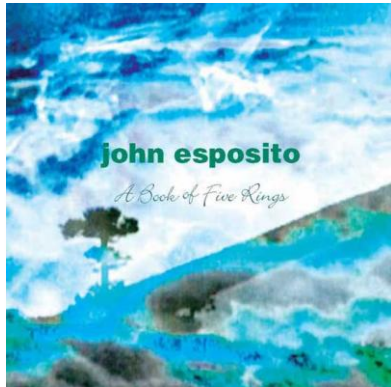
“ .....offering lucid, forward thinking, rhythmically propelling ideas, and display(ing) the right mix of moxy and taste.....He succeeds on many real and important levels in creating some of the finest new modern jazz you may hear in the post-Wynton Marsalis era.”

- Michael G. Nastos, All Music Guide

“...the egoless, ecstatic approach to small group Jazz...with great depth of feeling and boundless rhythmic energy.” Stuart Kremsky - Cadence

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## John Esposito: *A Book Of Five Rings*



[A Book of Five Rings](#)

“What is most striking is the support and interplay of the rhythm team, especially John's dynamic piano. On "Smitty", it is John's McCoy-like piano that is most astonishing and powerful, pushing the band higher and higher...The freer moments here are especially inspired and feature some fine soprano and bass clarinet swirling around one another intensely. The final piece, "...And His Spirit Ascended/Trane's Church" is an uplifting, epic-length, spiritual work which I find to be completely enchanting.” Bruce Lee Gallanter - Downtown Music Gallery

"Two Worlds" is a lengthy suite-like performance that alternates accordingly between sections of delicate interplay and cacophonous improvisation. The finale, another suite, "...and His Spirit Ascended/Trane's Church" builds slowly from a flute led meditation to a full out late period Coltrane ecstatic blowout. It's quite impressive and the musicians never lose focus during the near half our long dramatic improvisation. It unfolds like a ceremony and as such is quite an accomplishment.” Tim Niland - Jazz and Blues Blogspot

[Link to Sunjump YouTube videos](#)

[Multimedia Performance Link](#)

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### Contact:

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[Sunjump Records](#)

### Bookings :

Contact Cheryl Symister-Masterson at <mailto:cherylksm@yahoo.com>