

Richard D. Johnson-Biography

Born in Pittsburgh, home to jazz greats Art Blakey, Ray Brown, Jeff "Tain" Watts and Ahmad Jamal, Richard D. Johnson has strong territorial jazz roots. He was first introduced to the piano at the age of five by his father, a gospel pianist from Baltimore, MD. Since then, he has cultivated a rich and pedigreed musical background being schooled by some of the most legendary jazz musicians and studying at the most esteemed institutions of music. After receiving a scholarship and graduating from the Berklee School of Music in just two years, Richard entered the Boston Conservatory where he earned a Master's degree in Jazz Pedagogy in 3 semesters. He then went on to receive an Artist Performance Diploma at the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz Performance at New England Conservatory under the direction of the influential Ron Carter.

Richard was invited to become a member of *Wynton Marsalis' Septet* and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, which he did from 2000-2003. He also played as part of the Russell Malone Quartet, Delfeayo Marsalis Quintet & The Bobby Watson Quartet. After completing his tenure with those groups Richard started the *Reach Afar* program for young people ages of 7-17, educating them about elements of jazz in hip-hop.

Richard has traveled extensively, sharing the gift of jazz to audiences around the world. As a representative of the United States through the U.S. State Department, Richard was named United States Musical Ambassador. During that time he did six state department tours that took him to Central and South America, Africa, & The Middle East affording him the opportunity to perform in more than 76 countries. Richard has also accompanied such jazz icons as Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Jimmy Heath and recently Stevie Wonder.

In 2005 Richard became the musical director for the Atlanta Spirit LLC. This joint project enabled him to create a live instrumental five member band for the N.B.A and perform at all forty-six home games and outside activities. One of Richards other strengths is administration and music management. In 2013 he began visiting Doha Qatar as a performing artist at the Jazz at Lincoln Center venue. Having been well received there numerous times he was presented with the opportunity in 2015 to be the acting on site full time "Jazz Ambassador" in partnership with the St. Regis Doha Hotel branding company. Currently Richard is the CEO of "AFAR music" a jazz record label focusing on musicians from Chicago, IL. In his current role he performs with world-class artist promoting jazz to a vast array of audiences. Also

Richard is an Associate Jazz Professor at Peabody Conservatory of John Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD. Richard also serves as the piano instructor for the Ravinia Jazz Program and Jazz Up located in Chicago, IL. Richard is an accomplished composer and arranger with eight musical releases as a leader. His latest release as of June 7th 2024 is entitled "No Voy a Parar" a salsa recording made in Colombia and features J. Cadenas former member of Grupo Niche. Look out for his "Music is Business...What is this" podcast as well on Youtube, Spotify and I-tunes. Richard is a Yamaha endorsed piano artist!