

## **Biography: Harold Alfred Blanchard**

Harold A. Blanchard has achieved considerable prominence in Central Florida as a jazz pianist, composer, and arranger. His compositions have been performed by outstanding jazz artists such as Chick Corea, Ron Carter and Bob James, to name just a few.

He was born in New York City to parents who were musicians. His father played saxophone and clarinet with several big bands during the late 1930's and 1940's, including Cab Calloway and Ershine Hawkins. Harold received his early training in piano from his father beginning at age 6, the same year he debuted performing Chopin. At age 7 he began a 10-year study with Julliard School graduate Edwin Coates, and later, while studying at the Julliard School of Music, continued such training with famed American pianist Jacques Abram. Harold's first solo recital was performed when he was 14 years old, and his first New York recital occurred a year later.

Harold has recorded with the legendary Quincy Jones and has performed throughout the world in places such as El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, Bahamas, and the Middle East, playing for such dignitaries as Prime Minister Harold MacMillan. He composed "Guatemala Connection" for CBS and was commissioned to compose "New Earth Sonata" which was recorded under a CBS-Masterwork's label in the summer of 1983. Additionally, he performed and recorded this large work with noted jazz pianist Chick Corea and world-renowned flutist Hubert Laws. "New Earth" spent 16 months on Billboard's Top 10. The recording of this 28-minute composition highlighted and demonstrated Blanchard's abilities as both a classical and jazz composer.

Mr. Blanchard came to Central Florida in 1977 after spending eight years in Guatemala, Central America; and prior to that, ten years in Nassau, Bahamas. In these latter two places he earned a fine reputation as a teacher and performer, and continues to teach

privately at his home in New Smyrna Beach, Florida. Additionally, since the year 1983, he has been on staff as an adjunct professor at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida. He was presented with an honorary doctorate degree and his jazz improvisation course is required for Stetson University music majors. Respectfully addressed by his students as Dr. Blanchard he states: "I want to make jazz more digestible to the listener by inserting improvisation within a classical structure".

During the ensuing years at Stetson he has composed a number of classical works. "The Concertino for Flute and Orchestra", was premiered by the Stetson University Orchestra. In 1989 his "Piano Concerto in E Flat" was commissioned by Stetson University's Artists and Lecturers Committee and premiered on November 17, 1989. In this same year Harold was elected as a member to the prestigious Pi Kappa Lambda Society. His composition "Explorations for Violin Duo and Piano" was commissioned by Ruta and Alvaro Gomez and has been performed in Europe, Canada, Chile, and South America.

In 1991 Harold composed "Slightly Blue" for the Laclede Quartet. The "String Quartet No. 1" was commissioned for the Laclede Quartet in 1993 and premiered on January 23, 1994. "Innocent Meandering" was composed for guitarist Steve Robinson in 1993. It was recently included on Mr. Robinson's latest CD entitled "The American Record".

Blanchard continues to compose and perform as a soloist and as the leader of his jazz group "The Harold Blanchard Trio and Suzy Park." Mr. Blanchard is a member of BMI.