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Scott Colley

His forceful lines, impeccable articulation, assured sense of swing and sensitive support have made Scott Colley the bassist of choice for such jazz legends as Herbie Hancock, Jim Hall, Andrew Hill, and Michael Brecker. Colley's remarkably empathetic skills, strong melodic penchant and improvisational daring have also served him well in groups led by colleagues Chris Potter, Greg Osby, David Binney, and Kenny Werner. But it is as a composer and bandleader in his own right that Colley has flourished in recent years, as evidenced by a string of consistently impressive recordings, beginning with his 1996 debut *Portable Universe*, (Freelance) and continuing with 1997's *This Place* (SteepleChase), 1998's *Subliminal* (Criss Cross), 2000's *The Magic Line* (Arabesque) 2002's *Initial Wisdom* (Palmetto), and 2007's *Architect of the Silent Moment*(CAM jazz).

"I do a great deal of my writing from the bass," he has said, "but I look to all instruments for ideas and inspiration. I like the challenge of adapting musical ideas from other instruments to the bass. I think of myself as a musician first, and I try to listen to beyond my instrument, to hear all the music that is happening, and from there determine what I can contribute to that moment. Also, I've been privileged to play under a lot of great bandleaders and now I'm trying to add to that with projects where I have more input compositionally."

Since Colley's own brand of music reflects his wide ranging musical influences and experiences over the years, putting a label on it is far too limiting. "I'm not really interested in creating genre music," he says. "I'm not even really that comfortable with calling my music jazz, although that's one of my largest influences. But the great thing about improvised music is that it's a language that allows for a individual to include anything that they're interested in. And if you get with other musicians who also have that same openness, then anything is possible....any genre or idea can be entered into the mix. And to me that's the most interesting part about what we do, placing the communication first before preconception so that we can make music together in a way that is unique to that particular time and place."

Recognized by *Down Beat* Magazine as the top "Rising Star" bassist for 2002-2004, Colley has been one of the most in-demand bassists on the scene, appearing on more than 100 albums to date. He has worked with a variety of musicians from guitarists, Pat Metheny, Adam Rogers, John Scofield and Jim Hall to saxophonists Joe Lovano, Michael Brecker, Clifford Jordan and Osby, pianists Hancock, Kenny Werner, Joachim Kuhn and Edward Simon, and drummers Bill Stewart, Brian Blade, Billy Hart and Roy Haynes, supplying the rich tones and driving momentum behind their music.

"I want to be involved in a lot of different music," the thoughtful composer-bass player said in the liner notes to *Subliminal*. "Some music might speak to me melodically, some rhythmically, some intellectually. If I'm playing with Jim Hall one night, with Andrew Hill the next and something more groove-oriented like LAN Xang the next, it just feeds a different part of me. It's all music I listen to and absorb in different ways. Essentially, I



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have my style, whatever that is. And I can subtly adapt it for many different things. I don't think of music in terms of 'this is inside or this is old music.' It's more inclusive. It comes back to listening. When you're listening to what's really going on and not thinking about what you think is supposed to be going on, then you get to the root of what it's about."

Scott Colley has been living in New York since 1988.

Born on November 24, 1963 in Los Angeles, California, he began studying bass at age 11. At 13, he began studying with Monty Budwig while simultaneously woodshedding with Paul Chambers and Charles Mingus records and playing standards two nights a week at a jam session in Pasadena. By age 16, he discovered the music of Jaco Pastorius and Charlie Haden. The towering influence of Haden's music came into his playing through the classic recordings of Ornette Coleman. "He had the same qualities of simplicity and beauty that I appreciated in Paul Chambers," he told writer Ted Panken in the liner notes to *Subliminal*. "More than that, I was impressed by his patience. He never plays anything superfluous. You get the feeling every note he plays is exactly what he means."

Scott Colley attended Eagle Rock High School in Los Angeles, where he studied under John Rinaldo, renowned director of music at the school. During that time, Scott played concerts around L.A. with the pianist-composer Jimmy Rowles. After graduating high school he was granted a full scholarship to the California Institute for the Arts, where he focused on composition and jazz studies while also studying privately with Charlie Haden and classical bassist Fred Tinsley, of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. In 1986, he began touring and recording with jazz vocal legend Carmen McRae. He graduated Cal Arts with a Bachelor of Music degree in 1988 and soon after moved to New York City. While continuing to work with Ms. McRae through 1990, he also made U.S. and European tours with the likes of Dizzy Gillespie, Clifford Jordan, and Art Farmer. From 1991 to 1995, he performed and recorded with many bands including Jim Hall, John Scofield, James Newton, Joe Henderson, Billy Hart, Mike Stern, and Phil Woods. From 1996 to 1998, his work included touring with a group led by Joe Lovano and Jim Hall, Tours with Toots Thielemans; Bobby Hutcherson; Billy Hart and Kenny Werner; trio concerts with Ravi Coltrane and Al Foster; The Chris Potter Quartet; and Bob Berg; extensive touring with Andrew Hill's "Another Point of Departure" sextet and work with Lan Xang.

For 5 years beginning in 2000, Colley toured extensively as a member of Herbie Hancock's working trio (with drummer Teri Lynne Carrington) and two separate quartets (one featuring saxophonist Gary Thomas, the other featuring vibist Bobby Hutcherson) at concerts around the world. Hancock's trio has also performed in concert engagements with symphonic orchestras throughout the United States.

Colley's work in 2005-2007 included extensive touring with "Directions in Music", a collaboration with Micheal Brecker, Herbie Hancock, Roy Hargrove and Terri Lyne Carrington; Trio concerts with Pat Metheny; Tours with Jim Hall; Concerts with Toots Thielemans; Teaching residencies at The Banff Center, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Vallekilde Denmark. European and U.S. tours with Chris Potter's



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Quartet; trio concerts with Chris Potter and Antonio Sanchez.

U.S. and European tours with his own trio (with Mark Turner and Antonio Sanchez) as well as tours with his quartet.

Some recordings in 2006-07 include projects with: Chris Potter; Luciana Souza; Abbey Lincoln; Alex Sipiagin; Boz Scaggs; Adam Rogers; Donny McCaslin; 2 recordings with Kenny Werner; and his own release Archetector of the Silent Moment. (featuring: Ralph Alessi, David Binney, Craig Taborn, Jason Moran, Adam Rogers, Gregoire Maret, and Antonio Sanchez.)

In 2008 he is touring with Edward Simon and Brian Blade; Chris Potter's Underground; The Antonio Sanchez Quartet; Magic Circle (a trio with Dave Douglas and Mark Feldman); The David Binney Quartet (with Craig Taborn and Brian Blade); The Kenny Werner Quintet. Teaching residencies in the U.S. and Italy. Numerous recordings including work on a solo recording for ArtistShare (information at <http://www.scottcolley.com>)

"The thing that I really look for in terms of choosing projects," says the prolific bassist-composer-bandleader, "is getting with musicians who are really interested in conversation in music; creating something that's alive and different every time that it's played. I'm interested in playing with musicians who are constantly creating a dialogue in music. And in terms of composition, I'm trying to find ways to bring the most in that regard out of each musician....searching for the forms and creating structures that are suited for each individual, that give them the most freedom."

Bill Milkowski