

# JEAN-MICHEL PILC

## Pianist, Composer

### BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1960 in Paris, and now an American citizen, self-taught, Jean-Michel Pilc has performed with numerous giants in the music field such as: Roy Haynes, Michael Brecker, Dave Liebman, Jean Toussaint, Rick Margitza, Martial Solal, Michel Portal, Daniel Humair, Marcus Miller, Kenny Garrett, Lenny White, Chris Potter, John Abercrombie, Mingus Dynasty & Big Band, Lew Soloff and Richard Bona. He has also worked with Harry Belafonte, as his musical director and pianist.

Jean-Michel Pilc moved to New York City in 1995. There, he formed a trio with François Moutin (bass) and Ari Hoenig (drums). They recorded a one-week engagement at the legendary jazz club Sweet Basil and, in 2000, released two CDs: Jean-Michel Pilc Trio - Together - Live at Sweet Basil, NYC - Vol. 1 & 2 (A- Records).

Pilc then signed a record deal with Dreyfus Jazz. Pilc's first album for Dreyfus, Welcome Home (featuring the same trio), was released in 2002.

Pilc's next recording for Dreyfus, Cardinal Points, was released the following year. It featured Jean-Michel's extended work Trio Sonata, which was created with generous support from Chamber Music America's New Works: Creation and Presentation Program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

In 2004, Jean-Michel released his first solo album, Follow Me (Dreyfus). Jean-Michel Pilc then went back to trio format to record Live at Iridium, NYC, in 2004 and New Dreams in 2006, both for Dreyfus Jazz.

His latest release is titled True Story on Dreyfus Jazz and features Pilc with Billy Hart on drums and Boris Kozlov on bass.

In the last decade, Jean-Michel has been intensively touring worldwide, performing trio, solo, and also teaching clinics and master classes. In 2006, Jean-Michel was appointed jazz educator at NYU (New York University), where he is involved in private lessons (piano and other instruments), ensemble classes and improvisation workshops. He's also teaching for the New School & Le Moyne College in Syracuse, NY, as well as privately.

In 2009 Pilc received his second New Works: Creation and Presentation Grant from Chamber Music America. His new project has been the writing and performance of "Modern Lights" – a composition reflecting Charlie Chaplin's work, and the inspiration Pilc has gained from his movies. The project was premiered at the Caramoor Jazz Festival in August of 2009.

Currently there is a new documentary out by John McCormick about Jean-Michel titled "Jean-Michel Pilc – A Portrait" which was released in the US in 2009.

In 2010-2011 Jean-Michel will be touring with his new trio featuring bassist Boris Kozlov and drummer Billy Hart in celebration of the new release "True Story."

Pilc is also currently working on a pedagogical book about jazz and improvisation.

As if Pilc is not creating enough these days, he is also working on a new septet project titled "Big One" along with a brand new quartet project titled "Together", co-led by Jean-Michel, François Moutin, Ari Hoenig and Joel Frahm.

## QUOTES

*His densely harmonic reinventions of standards you thought you knew clearly shows a musical genius at work.*  
Eric Brace, The Washington Post

*A dazzlingly inventive pianist.*  
Nate Chinen, The New York Times

*Jean-Michel Pilc belongs right in the front row.*  
John Fordham, Guardian Unlimited (UK, \*\*\*\* review)

*One of the astounding jazz piano trios of the past decade.*  
Don Williamson, Jazz Review

*Mr Pilc seems to have dropped from the sky fully formed, with technique and his ideas in place. He is a physical and densely harmonic player, a splashy stunner who also has a Rubik's-cube mind for chord substitutions.*  
Ben Ratliff, The New York Times

*...visual art references come to mind: Cubist renderings of melody in which the original is reshaped into a completely different visual perspective; the shimmering opaqueness of Impressionism in some of Pilc's lush harmonies...*  
Don Heckman, Los Angeles Times

*"Follow Me" stands a major summation of Pilc's keyboard art, which has no counterparts. Pilc ranks among today's titans of the instrument... there's more to his art than the speed, precision and power of his 10 phenomenal fingers.*  
Howard Reich, Chicago Tribune (2004 10 best jazz CDs).

*I am absolutely stunned by the work of pianist Jean-Michel Pilc... The rhythm section sizzles under (his) leadership*  
Bob Dorough, vocalist.

*...make no mistake about it, to his credit, Mr. Pilc is very unique... I would say that this trio starts at Mars, and then goes from there. Don't expect anything resembling conventional interpretations. This is fascinating and rewarding music...*  
Rick Helzer, Jazz Improv

*The big discovery in the acoustic field was Jean-Michel Pilc. His sound is majestic, his statements urging. Supported by an equally strong rhythm section it didn't take him much effort to get Carel-Willinck Hall steaming...*  
NRC Handelsblad, reporting on a North Sea Jazz Festival appearance

*While never dry or abstract, Pilc is a model for playing a little to say a lot.*  
Mark Keresman, Jazziz

*should be studied in every music school in the galaxy...*  
Harvey Siders, Jazz Times +Top 50 Picks for Critics Picks 2003

*...ridiculously well-balanced, and trading in the kind of grace that still has the power to shake a room. Keith Jarrett found something similar... Pilc's nudging it a bit further down the line.*  
Down Beat, four Star Hot Box review

## SELECTIVE DISCOGRAPHY

### As a leader:

- Jean-Michel Pilc: True Story  
(2010, Dreyfus Jazz)
- Jean-Michel Pilc: New Dreams  
(2006, Dreyfus Jazz)
- Jean-Michel Pilc: Live at Iridium  
(2005, Dreyfus Jazz)
- Jean-Michel Pilc: Follow Me  
(2004, Dreyfus Jazz)
- Jean-Michel Pilc: Cardinal Points  
(2003, Dreyfus Jazz)
- Jean-Michel Pilc Trio: Welcome Home  
(2002, Dreyfus Jazz)
- Jean-Michel Pilc Trio: Together  
Live at Sweet Basil, Volume 1 & 2  
(2000, A-Records)
- Jean-Michel Pilc: Big One  
for 13 Piece Band  
(1993, EMP/Harmonia Mundi)
- Jean-Michel Pilc Trio: Funambule  
(1989, Blue Line)

### As a sideman or co-leader:

- Ari Hoenig: Inversations  
(2006, Dreyfus Jazz)
- Rosario Giuliani: More than ever  
(2004, Dreyfus Jazz)
- Elisabeth Kontomanou: Midnight Sun  
(2004, Nocturne Records)
- Rick Margitza: Rue des Voleurs  
(2004, Nocturne Records)
- Ari Hoenig: The Painter  
(2004, Smalls Records)
- Jean-Michel Pilc / Hein Van De Geyn Duo:  
The Long Journey  
(2001, A-Records)
- Sam Newsome and Global Unity  
(2001, Palmetto)
- Elisabeth Kontomanou: Hands and Incantation  
(Duo, 2000, Steeplechase)
- Richard Bona: Scenes from My Life  
(1999, Sony / Columbia)
- J.D. Walter: Sirens in the C-House  
(1997, Dreambox)
- Jean Toussaint: Life I Want  
(1995, World Circuit)