

RICK BRAUN *biography*

ARTIZEN  MUSIC GROUP

There's a harmonious, melodic, symphonic blending of the way Rick Braun has chosen to live his life.

His latest CD, *Yours Truly*, draws from his diverse musical tastes and boasts clever, engaging arrangements to rebirth tunes you know by heart. Rock and soul, funk and love themes, even a Top 40 waltz all picked and packed full of fresh flavors and even chilled a bit. The CD will be released by ARTizen Music Group on October 25, 2005.

Although Braun had flourished through the usual musician's life on the road, he has come full circle as a family man, as well as a successful musician, a respected sideman, trumpet phenomenon, composer/arranger, producer and his newest entrepreneurial pursuit, record label co-owner.

But this pace was one that was set in stone back in his hometown of Allentown, PA, where he was dubbed "Renaissance" man by the high school wrestling coach. The ambitious teen was into all things - music, tennis, basketball, and writing.

"I started playing trumpet when I was eight while my Grandfather played the violin and my Grandmother played piano. My self-taught Mom played banjo, piano, and she sang." He jokes, "My Father, a steel worker, by day, who worked two jobs to support us, couldn't carry a tune. He would sing the Notre Dame Fight Song to put us to sleep!"

Braun began composing songs when he was just ten years old and, in junior high school he formed a combo band that played, "Sunny," at a talent show. The rest is history.

Braun left Allentown to attend the prestigious Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, but along the way, he dropped out - for good reason. He was offered a record deal in Los Angeles with his jazz-fusion band, "Auracle" and, surprisingly, his Mom, the musical one, wanted her son to stay in school. He was surprised that his Dad, the "civilian," supported his decision to leave school to pursue his passion for music.

Braun's first success was "Here With Me," a tune co-written with Kevin Cronin for REO Speedwagon, that went on to become a Top 20 hit. His talent led him to performing and recording with the best, including Rod Stewart on his "Out of Order" tour which lasted eighteen months in the U.S, and then continued on to Europe. "It was everything you read about in rock and roll land. We were living the life."

But, a solo career was in the cards for Braun. "Beat Street", a funk infused album, which topped the charts for thirteen weeks, became Radio & Records "#1 Smooth Jazz Record of the Year," and both Braun and Beat Street received the Gavin Report's "Artist and Album of the Year" awards in 1996."

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Following that success was *Body and Soul* which sold over 100,000 copies, landing Braun his second "Artist of the Year" title. The hits "Hollywood and Vine" and "South of Midnight" from *Full Stride* helped make a name for this pioneering trumpeter. It was a natural for *The Best of Rick Braun* to follow. He revised Roberta Flack's "Feel Like Making Love" with a sultry vibe and, "Shake It Up," a duet project with saxophonist Boney James debuted at #1 while the first single, "Grazin' In the Grass" remained on the charts at #1 for seven weeks.

Hit records seemed to follow Braun. His next effort, *Kisses In the Rain*, was a very special CD, not only because it hit #1 on Billboard's Contemporary Jazz Chart and received "Song of the Year" for the title cut, but "Emma's Song," which was inspired by the birth of his first child, Emma during the making of that album, appeared on that CD.

In addition, the passionate and melodic tune, "Middle of the Night," added the movies to Braun's resume, as it kicks off the love story of Keanu Reeves and Charlize Theron in the film *Sweet November*. "It's like a spaghetti western love theme!"

His name and talent soon made Braun the object of the attention of many top recording and touring artists. He has collaborated with such an eclectic mix of artists including Tina Turner, Natalie Cole, Sade, Tom Petty, War, Glen Frey, and Crowded House.

This musician also helped launch the success of other artists to #1 status such as, Richard Elliott, Dave Koz, Brian Bromberg, Stanley Turrentine, Peter White, and 3rd Force. Also a very in-demand producer, Braun delivered #1 radio hits with pianist David Benoit and guitarist Marc Antoine.

Having worked with an extraordinary array of artists, Braun still has his musical inspirations: John Coltrane, Joni Mitchell, Paul Simon, Randy Travis, Chet Baker, Otis Redding, and even Pink Floyd, to name a few.

As a man Braun, in addition to his many talents as a musician, is known within the industry as "loyal." He is currently producing pals Willie and Lobo, a gypsy duo (who's CD he produced in the early days).

Creating the label ARTizen Music Group was a proactive move for Braun. "When Warner Jazz shut their doors and Richard Elliott was without a label we decided that it was time to take our careers and our art into our own hands. To take a check upfront from a record company and to not have control of what's going to happen with them down the road is a scary thought. So, creating this label and maintaining the control says to us that it's pretty much a good risk. Hopefully that proves to be true in the long run."

Despite his numerous awards and accolades, Braun keeps a low profile. "I try not to be proud of anything; it gets me in trouble. There's a pride thing, then entitlement, and an ego. That's trouble," says Braun.

He credits his wife, Christiane, for keeping him humble. They met over ten years ago and, the duo can thank Immigration for making the union legal. "They thought she was making too many trips over here - now we are celebrating eight years of marriage and still going strong!" He refers to Christiane as "an angel and a Ferrari rolled into one." (It's a private thing.)

But, one thing is not private, with *Yours Truly*, Braun is on the verge of another milestone in what has been an illustrious and fulfilling career - giving new life to classic music - all the while enjoying the ride.

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