



Chris Stevens (Trumpeter/Composer/Arranger)

Biography

To those who have seen him in action, the phrase, “Chris Stevens on trumpet” brings with it an expectation of greatness. The New Jersey native has worked with legends, old and in the making, resulting in a resume that is both extensive and diverse. Having honed his skills as a performer, producer, composer and arranger, Chris seeks to make his mark on the world as a solo artist and also with his band, Vertical Current.

Born December 2, 1982, Chris started his musical journey at the age of 6 with the drums, but discovered his affinity for the trumpet at the age of 8. At the top of his list of musical influences is his immediate family. Chris’ father Don is a bassist (Jill Scott’s “The Way” & “Show Me”, Vivian Green’s “Fanatic”); his mother Cheryl is a singer (Chuck D’s “Sides” from the *Mad City* soundtrack, Vivian Green’s “Frustrated”), and his older brother Erik, also known as “E Trib”, is a drummer (Jill Scott, Floetry, Keisha Cole, Vivian Green, Ben Kinney, etc) whom he credits as being the reason he first picked up the trumpet. While browsing through his father’s record collection, Chris discovered the artists and albums that would have the greatest influence over his playing during the formative years; Miles Davis (“Sketches Of Spain”, “Birth Of The Cool”, “Amandla”, “You’re Under Arrest”), Weather Report (“Heavy Weather”), Jaco Pastorius (“Invitation Live”), Yellow Jackets (“Four Corners”). In addition to attending local summer camps for the performing arts where he was often a featured soloist, Chris could often be found at a jam session developing those golden ears he is known for. At age 12 Chris began attending music camps at Cheyney University where he studied with the legendary Shirley Scott, Prof. George Allen, and Prof. Donald Dumpson. By the age of 14, Chris was sitting in with his dad on gigs and winning talent shows at school.

In 1999, Chris was asked to perform with his cousin Tye Tribbett for his groups 3rd anniversary. This was the beginning of a 14year career in music. Chris learned many of the skills he uses now by working with Tye and the band that would come to be known as “Soundcheck”.

After graduating in 2001 from Medical Arts High School in Camden, Chris went on to attend Berklee College of Music in Boston. While there he studied trumpet with Professor Tiger Okoshi. He also befriended a ton of talented musicians such as

Esperanza Spalding (Grammy award winning bassist/vocalist), Christian Scott (Grammy nominated trumpeter/composer), Rachel Loy (singer/songwriter), Nikki Glaspie (drummer for Beyoncé), Philip D. Bailey (who now travels with his father's group Earth Wind and Fire), Jeriel Johnson (drummer/Disney/Warner Bros/Fulsircle Ent.) and many others.

During a semester off, Chris had the privilege of playing on Vivian Green's debut album, "A Love Story". His cool muted trumpet graces the jazzy ballad, "No Sitting By The Phone", which was produced by Tye Tribbett. By the spring of 2003, he decided to move back home to resume playing with Tye, who was actively negotiating a deal with Sony Music. From 2003- 2009 he traveled extensively throughout the U.S. and abroad. During which time Chris grew into the role of horn section leader, a position he would hold for the remainder of his time with the group. While on the road he met, fell in love with, and later married his beautiful wife, Shaylah, who happens to be an incredibly talented singer and songwriter in her own right (Benita Farmer "Not Alone", Tye Tribbett "Victory", "Stand Out", "Fresh"). The two continue to write and produce together for their company, Signs Of Life Music LLC.

In the fall of 2008, Chris would attend Temple University's Boyer College of Music where he studied *Jazz Performance* with Terell Stafford. He also studied with Dick Oatts, John Swana, Ben Schachter, and Tim Warfield among others. He graduated with honors in 2012.

Over the last 3 years, Chris has continued to add to his impressive resume. He has traveled with Hidden Beach Recording Artist Jeff Bradshaw. He has also performed with The Roots, Earth Wind and Fire, Darryl Hall, Michael McDonald, Eddie Levert, Lauryn Hill and Queen Latifah to name a few. As a horn arranger, Chris' work can be heard on 50+ recordings. His band provides the perfect outlet for his colorful compositions. Vertical Current has an EP on iTunes and a full length CD/DVD on the way.

At 30, Chris is still making music just about all of the time. In the words of his company's motto, he aspires to make "Music that you can live to". He can often be found on a stage or even in the center of a crowd with his horn in hand or with his headphones on. When he's not out and about he's probably in the studio or watching a movie. Besides the jazz greats, Chris has found his daily dose of musical inspiration from a range of genres including film scores. Some of his favorite film composers include John Williams, Hans Zimmer, Alex Wurman, Terrence Blanchard, Bill Conti, and Vince DiCola. He hopes to score films in addition to touring and making records.

"Music is such a wonderful gift. I want the music I make to inspire and uplift."

-Chris Stevens

Signs Of Life Music LLC & Vertical Current