

Pat Metheny



Patrick Bruce "Pat" Metheny, (born August 12, 1954) is an American jazz guitarist and composer. He is the leader of the Pat Metheny Group and is also involved in duets, solo works and other side projects. His style incorporates elements of progressive and contemporary jazz, post-bop, Latin jazz and jazz fusion. Metheny has three gold albums and 20 Grammy Awards. He is the brother of jazz flugelhornist and journalist Mike Metheny.

Biography

Metheny was born and raised in Lee's Summit, Missouri, a suburb southeast of Kansas City. At age 15, he won a Down Beat scholarship to a one-week jazz camp and was taken under the wing of guitarist Attila Zoller. Zoller also invited the young Metheny to New York City to see the likes of Jim Hall and Ron Carter. Following his graduation from Lee's Summit High School, Metheny briefly attended the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida in 1972, where he was quickly offered a teaching position. He then moved to Boston to take a teaching assistantship at the Berklee College of Music with jazz vibraphonist Gary Burton. He first made his name as a teenage prodigy under the wing of Burton. In 1974 he made his recording debut on two sessions for pianist Paul Bley and Carol Goss' Improvising Artists label, along with fretless electric bassist Jaco Pastorius.

Metheny entered the wider jazz scene in 1975 when he joined Burton's band, where he played alongside resident jazz guitarist Mick Goodrick. Goodrick was a 1967 alumnus of Berklee, who had held a teaching post there in the early 1970s. The two guitarists were interviewed jointly by *Guitar Player Magazine* in 1975, bringing them to the attention of fellow guitar aficionados around the world. Metheny's musical momentum carried him rapidly to the point that he had soon written enough material to record his debut album, *Bright Size Life*, with Pastorius and drummer Bob Moses.

Metheny's next recording, 1977's *Watercolors*, was the first to feature pianist Lyle Mays, Metheny's most frequent collaborator. The other musicians on this session were Eberhard Weber on upright bass and Danny Gottlieb on drums. Metheny's next album formalized his partnership with Mays and began the Pat

Metheny Group, featuring several songs they co-wrote; the album was released as the eponymous Pat Metheny Group on West German musician/producer Manfred Eicher's ECM record label. Metheny also has released solo, trio, quartet and duet recordings with musicians such as Hall, Dave Holland, Roy Haynes, Toninho Horta, Burton, Chick Corea, Pedro Aznar, Pastorius, Charlie Haden, John Scofield, Jack DeJohnette, Herbie Hancock, Bill Stewart, Ornette Coleman, Brad Mehldau, Joni Mitchell, Milton Nascimento, Santana, Dominic Miller, Michael Brecker, Trilok Gurtu and many others.

Metheny has also joined projects such as Song X with Coleman; Parallel Realities, with Jack DeJohnette; Jazz Baltica with [REDACTED] and other Nordic jazz players like E.S.T. and Nils Landgren; and he has played with singers from all over the world, such as Silje Nergaard on Tell Me Where You're Going (1990), Bruce Hornsby on Harbor Lights (1993) and Hot House (1995), Noa on Noa (1994), Abbey Lincoln on A Turtle's Dream (1994) and [REDACTED] opek on Upojenie (2002).

Metheny has been touring for more than 30 years, playing between 120 and 240 concerts a year. He has three children with his wife, Latifa.

Pat Metheny Group

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The Pat Metheny Group is a band founded in 1977. The first Pat Metheny Group release, 1978's Pat Metheny Group, featured the writing duo of Metheny and Mays, a collaboration which has spanned over 25 years and 15 albums. The recording featured the electric bass playing of Pastorius's protégé, Mark Egan. The second group album, American Garage (1979), was a breakout hit, reaching number 1 on the Billboard Jazz chart and crossing over onto the pop charts as well, largely on the strength of the up-tempo opening track "(Cross the) Heartland", which became a signature tune for the group. This early incarnation of the group included Dan Gottlieb on drums.

The group built upon its success through constant touring across the USA and Europe. The early group featured a unique sound, particularly due to Metheny's Gibson ES-175 guitar coupled to two Eventide Clockworks' Harmonizer digital delay units and Mays' Oberheim and Sequential Circuits Prophet 5 synthesizers and Steinway piano. Even in this early state the band played in a wide range of styles from folk to rock to experimental. Metheny later started working with the Roland GR-300 guitar synthesizer and the Synclavier guitar system made by New England Digital. Mays expanded his setup with the Synclavier keyboard and later with various other synthesizers.

From 1982 to 1985 the Pat Metheny Group released Offramp (1982); a live set, Travels (1983); and First Circle (1984); as well as The Falcon and the Snowman (1985), a soundtrack album for the movie of the same name in which they collaborated with David Bowie. A single from the soundtrack, "This Is Not America", reached number 14 in the British Top 40 in early 1985 as well as number 32 in the USA.

Offramp marked the first appearance of bassist Steve Rodby (replacing Egan) and Brazilian "*guest artist*" Nana Vasconcelos, whose work on percussion and wordless vocals marked the first addition of Latin music shadings to the Group's sound, a trend which continued and intensified on First Circle with the addition of Argentinian multi-instrumentalist Aznar, which also marked the group debut of drummer Paul Wertico

(replacing Gottlieb) – both Rodby and Wertico were members of the Simon and Bard Group at the time, and had played in Simon-Bard as well, in Chicago, before joining Metheny.

This period became a peak of commercial popularity of the band, especially for the live recording *Travels*. *First Circle* would also be Metheny's last project with ECM Records; he had been a key artist for ECM, but left following conceptual disagreements with label founder Manfred Eicher. The next Pat Metheny Group releases would be based around a further intensification of the Brazilian rhythms first heard in the early 1980s. Additional Latin musicians appeared as guests, notably Brazilian percussion player Armando Marçal. *Still Life (Talking)* (1987) was the Group's first release on new label Geffen Records, and featured several popular tracks, followed by *Letter from Home* (1989), which also featured Aznar and Marçal. During this period The Steppenwolf Theater Company of Chicago featured an assortment of compositions by Metheny and Mays for their production of Lyle Kessler's play *Orphans*, where it has remained special optional music for all productions of the play around the world since.

Metheny then again delved into adventurous solo and band projects, and four years went by before the release of the next record for the next Pat Metheny Group, a live set entitled *The Road to You*, which featured tracks from the two Geffen studio albums amongst new tunes. The group integrated new instrumentation and technologies into its work, notably Mays' unique playing technique accomplished by adding midi-controlled synth sounds at command during acoustic solos via a pedal on the piano.

Mays and Metheny themselves refer to the following three Pat Metheny Group releases as the triptych: *We Live Here* (1995), *Quartet* (1996), and *Imaginary Day* (1997). Moving away from the Latin style which had dominated the releases of the previous 10 years, these albums were the most wide-ranging and least commercial Group releases, including experimentations with sequenced synthetic drums on one track, free-form improvisation on acoustic instruments, and symphonic signatures, blues and sonata schemes.

After another hiatus, the Pat Metheny Group re-emerged in 2002 with the release of *Speaking of Now*, another change in direction adding musicians to the band who were a generation younger and thus grew up with the Pat Metheny Group. The new members were drummer Antonio Sanchez from Mexico City, trumpet player Cuong Vu, and bassist, vocalist, guitarist, and percussionist Richard Bona from Cameroon.

The latest release, 2005's *The Way Up*, is another large concept record which consists of one 68-minute-long piece (although split into four sections solely for CD navigation), a tightly organized but not through-composed piece based on a pair of three-note kernels: The opening B, A#, F# and the derived B, A, F#. The reception of *The Way Up* was consistent, with standing ovations in each of the almost 90 concerts during the world tour of 2005. On *The Way Up*, harmonica player Grégoire Maret from Switzerland was introduced as a new group member, while Bona contributed only as a guest musician.

During the world tour Brazilian multi-instrumentalist Nando Lauria completed the line-up of the Pat Metheny Group. *The Way Up* was released through Nonesuch Records and all of Metheny's Geffen and Warner Brothers back catalogue is to be released on the label. Core members of the group are Metheny, Mays, and Steve Rodby (double and electric bass), who joined in 1980. Drummer Paul Wertico replaced Gottlieb in 1983 and continued to play with the group for more than 18 years, until he was replaced by Sanchez, currently also a member of The Pat Metheny Trio.

The current[when?] Pat Metheny Group members are Metheny, Mays, Rodby, Sanchez, and Vu. Other musicians that have been hired regularly for Metheny Group tours are: Mark Ledford (vocals, trumpet,

guitar); David Blamires (vocals, miscellaneous instruments); Marçal (percussion); Aznar (vocals, guitar, percussion); and Bona (vocals, guitar, bass, and percussion). On the most recent[when?] tour to promote the record *The Way Up*, Grégoire Maret (harmonica, percussion, vocals) and Lauria (guitar, percussion, vocals) joined the Group. Pat Metheny has collected 19 Grammy Awards, and of them, as part of The Pat Metheny Group, 10 of those awards were consecutive.

Side projects

When working outside of the confines of the PMG, Metheny has shown different sides to his musical personality. On *Secret Story* (1992) and *Orchestrion* (2009), he has ventured into genres of music not covered by the PMG. In the late 1980s Metheny began collaborating more with established jazz figures. While in his main career Metheny moved from Brazilian and other styles of Latin jazz into more traditional jazz, he continued to expand his musical boundaries in the mid-90s with the avant-garde albums *Zero Tolerance for Silence* and *The Sign of Four* (with Derek Bailey). In 2006, Metheny teamed up with Brad Mehldau and his trio for the Nonesuch albums *Metheny/Mehldau* and *Metheny/Mehldau Quartet*. Also in 2006, Metheny appeared as a sideman on Michael Brecker's final album release, *Pilgrimage*.

In 2012, Metheny revisited a quartet approach with Sanchez (drums), Ben Williams (bass) and Chris Potter (Sax). This ensemble was called the Unity Band. They toured Europe and the US during the latter half of the year.

In 2013, as an extension of the Unity Band project, Metheny announced the formation of the new Pat Metheny Unity Group, with the addition of the Italian composer and multi-instrumentalist Giulio Carmassi. During 2014 the new PMUG completed its first world tour.

Metheny also works for a non-profit organization known as CELP, The California Environmental Legacy Project.

Guitar contributions

Continuing the tradition of jazz guitarists borrowing tones and techniques from their rock counterparts, Metheny has made his own additions to the jazz guitar tone palette.

Six-string electric

Metheny's tone, which has evolved over the years, involves using the natural full-frequency response of his hollow-body guitar, combined with high-midrange settings on his amplifier to create a smooth, sustaining lead sound that is virtually devoid of piercing treble yet is able to cut through a dense mix. By using digital signal processing that involves digital delay/chorus and reverb, he has created a big, rich, and resonant instrumental voice.[citation needed]

Twelve-string electric

Metheny was an early proponent of the twelve-string guitar in jazz. During his 1975 tour with the Gary Burton "Quartet" (five people, including Metheny), he primarily played electric 12-string guitar against the 6-string work of resident guitarist Mick Goodrick.

Prior to Metheny, Pat Martino had used the electric twelve-string guitar on a studio album, *Desperado*, and John McLaughlin had used a double-neck electric guitar with the Mahavishnu Orchestra. Ralph

Towner was perhaps the first to use acoustic 12-string guitar extensively in Jazz ("The Moors", from Weather Report's *I Sing the Body Electric*, Columbia, 1972), and Larry Coryell and Philip Catherine made extensive use of acoustic twelve string in alternate tunings at the 1975 Montreux Jazz Festival, later releasing some of the material on their 1976 *Twin House* album. Metheny used 12-string guitar on his debut album, *Bright Size Life* (1977), including alternate tuning on "Sirabhorn", and on later albums ("San Lorenzo, from *Pat Metheny Group and Travels*).

Guitar synthesizer

Metheny was also one of the first jazz guitarists to make heavy use of the Roland GR-300 Guitar Synthesizer. While John Abercrombie and Bill Frisell also used Roland guitar synthesizers heavily in the 1980s, Metheny is the only one of the three who still uses the instrument regularly. Unlike many guitar synthesizer users, Metheny limits himself to a very small number of sounds. In interviews, he has argued that each of the timbres achievable through guitar synthesis should be treated as a separate instrument, and that he has tried to master each of these "instruments" instead of using the synthesizer for incidental color. One of the "patches" that he has often used is on Roland's JV-80 "Vintage Synth" expansion card, entitled titled "Pat's GR-300". Metheny was also heavily into the Synclavier Digital Audio Workstation made by New England Digital and brought it out on tour starting in the early 1980s.

42-string Pikasso guitar

Metheny plays a custom-made Pikasso I created by Canadian luthier Linda Manzer on "Into the Dream" and on the albums *Quartet*, *Imaginary Day*, *Jim Hall & Pat Metheny, Trio→Live*, and the *Speaking of Now Live* and *Imaginary Day* DVDs. Metheny has also used the guitar in his guest appearances on other artists' albums.

Manzer has also made many acoustic guitars for Metheny, including a mini guitar, an acoustic sitar guitar, and the baritone guitar, which Metheny used for the recording of *One Quiet Night*. He also used the Pikasso on *Metheny Mehdau Quartet*, his second collaboration with pianist Mehdau and his trio sidemen Larry Grenadier and Jeff Ballard; the Pikasso is featured on Metheny's composition "The Sound of Water".

Influences

As a young musician, Metheny did everything he could to sound like Wes Montgomery, but when he was 14 or 15, he decided that he felt that it was disrespectful to imitate him. In the liner notes on the 2-disc Montgomery compilation *Impressions: The Verve Jazz Sides*, Metheny is quoted as saying, "Smokin' at the Half Note is the absolute greatest jazz-guitar album ever made. It is also the record that taught me how to play."

Ornette Coleman's 1968 recording *New York Is Now!* was particularly instrumental in inspiring Metheny to find his own direction. He has recorded Coleman compositions on a number of his records (starting with a medley of "Round Trip" and "Broadway Blues" on his debut *Bright Size Life*); worked extensively with Coleman collaborators such as Charlie Haden, Dewey Redman, and Billy Higgins; and has even made a record, *Song X*, with Coleman.

Metheny's playing (as well as his tone) also show significant influence by Hall, Joe Diorio, Kenny Burrell, Joe Pass, McLaughlin and other classic jazz players. Metheny has often been quoted saying that he is as likely to name non-guitarists as significant stylistic influences as fellow guitar players, giving as examples

players like Clifford Brown and John Coltrane. He has stated that Miles Davis' live album *Four & More* was hugely influential on his pursuit into jazz music. He has also admitted to being heavily influenced by the Beatles, going so far as to say that everything by the Beatles has impacted him as a musician. He has paid significant attention to the evolution of guitar playing across genres, and is familiar with the playing of notables from the likes of rock guitarists Eddie Van Halen to Leo Kottke.

In particular, he has been influenced by Brazilian music – both the European-influenced jazz sound of the bossa nova and the intensely polyrhythmic Afro-Brazilian sounds of the country's northeast. Metheny made 3 albums on ECM with the Brazilian vocalist and percussionist Naná Vasconcelos in the early 1980s. He also lived in Brazil from the late 1980s to the early 1990s and performed with several local musicians such as Milton Nascimento and Toninho Horta. He also played with Antonio Carlos Jobim as a tribute, in a live performance in Carnegie Hall *Salutes The Jazz Masters: Verve 50th Anniversary*.

He is also a fan of several pop music artists, especially singer/songwriters including James Taylor (after whom he named the song "James" on *Offramp*); Bruce Hornsby, Cheap Trick, and Joni Mitchell, with whom he performed on her *Shadows and Light* (1980, *Asylum/ Elektra*) live tour. Metheny is also fond of Buckethead's music. He also worked with, sponsored or helped to make recordings of singer/songwriters from all over the world, such as Pedro Aznar (Argentina), Akiko Yano (Japan), David Bowie (UK), Silje Nergaard (Norway), Noa (Israel), and [REDACTED] Jopek (Poland).

Two of Metheny's recordings, *The Way Up* and *Orchestrion*, evidence the influence of American minimalist composer Steve Reich and utilize similar rhythmic figures structured around pulse. Reich's composition *Electric Counterpoint* was first recorded by Metheny and appears on the *Different Trains* CD released by Nonesuch Records in 1987.

Metheny Brothers

Metheny took part in recording some of the CDs by his older brother, trumpeter Mike Metheny, a jazz musician and a trumpet player based in Kansas City, Missouri, among them *Day In – Night Out* (1986) and more recently *Close Enough for Love* (2001).

Bibliography

Goins, Wayne E. (2001). *Emotional Response to Music: Pat Metheny's Secret Story*. Edwin Mellen Press.

Discography

- 1976: *Bright Size Life*
- 1977: *Watercolors*
- 1978: *Pat Metheny Group*
- 1979: *New Chautauqua*
- 1979: *American Garage*
- 1980: *80/81*
- 1981: *As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls*
- 1982: *Offramp*
- 1983: *Travels*
- 1984: *Rejoicing*

- 1984: First Circle
- 1985: The Falcon and the Snowman
- 1986: Song X
- 1987: Still Life (Talking)
- 1989: Letter from Home
- 1990: Question and Answer
- 1992: Secret Story
- 1993: The Road to You
- 1994: Zero Tolerance for Silence
- 1994: I Can See Your House from Here
- 1995: We Live Here
- 1996: Quartet
- 1996: Passaggio per il paradiso
- 1997: Beyond the Missouri Sky
- 1997: Imaginary Day
- 1998: Like Minds
- 1999: Jim Hall & Pat Metheny
- 1999: A Map of the World
- 2000: Trio 99 → 00
- 2000: Trio - Live
- 2002: Speaking of Now
- 2003: One Quiet Night
- 2005: The Way Up
- 2006: Metheny/Mehldau
- 2007: Metheny/Mehldau Quartet
- 2008: Day Trip
- 2008: Tokyo Day Trip
- 2008: Upojenie
- 2009: Quartet Live
- 2010: Orchestrion
- 2011: What's It All About
- 2012: Unity Band
- 2013: The Orchestrion Project
- 2013: Tap
- 2014: KIN (←→)
- Video albums[edit]
- 1980: Shadows and Light
- 1981: Woodstock Jazz Festival
- 1990: DeJohnette, Hancock, Holland, Metheny in concert
- 1993: Secret Story - Live New Brunswick, NJ
- 1993: More Travels
- 1995: We Live Here - Live in Japan
- 2001: Imaginary Day Live

- 2003: Speaking of Now Live
- 2006: The Way Up - Live
- 2012: The Orchestrion Project
- 2015: Pat Metheny - The Unity Sessions

Awards and recognition

In 2009, 2010 and 2011, Metheny was voted "Guitarist of the Year" in DownBeat Magazine's Readers Poll.

In 1995, Metheny was granted the Miles Davis Award by the Montreal International Jazz Festival.

List of Grammy Awards received by Metheny:

Year	Category	Title	Note
2013	Best Jazz Instrumental Album	<i>Unity Band</i>	With The Unity Band
2012	Best New Age Album	<i>What's It All About</i>	Pat Metheny
2008	Best Jazz Instrumental Album	<i>Pilgrimage</i>	Won as a Producer
2006	Best Contemporary Jazz Album	<i>The Way Up</i>	Pat Metheny Group
2004	Best New Age Album	<i>One Quiet Night</i>	Pat Metheny
2003	Best Contemporary Jazz Album	<i>Speaking of Now</i>	Pat Metheny Group
2001	Best Jazz Instrumental Solo	"(Go) Get It"	Won as a Soloist
2000	Best Jazz Instrumental Performance	<i>Like Minds</i>	with Chick Corea, Dave Holland, Gary Burton, Roy Haynes
1999	Best Rock Instrumental Performance	"The Roots of Coincidence"	Pat Metheny Group
1999	Best Contemporary Jazz Performance	<i>Imaginary Day</i>	Pat Metheny Group
1998	Best Jazz Instrumental Performance	<i>Beyond the Missouri Sky</i>	with Charlie Haden
1996	Best Contemporary Jazz Performance	<i>We Live Here</i>	Pat Metheny Group
1994	Best Contemporary Jazz Performance	<i>The Road to You</i>	Pat Metheny Group
1993	Best Contemporary Jazz Performance	<i>Secret Story</i>	Pat Metheny
1991	Best Instrumental Composition	"Change of Heart"	Won as a Composer
1989	Best Jazz Fusion Performance	<i>Letter from Home</i>	Pat Metheny Group
1988	Best Jazz Fusion Performance	<i>Still Life</i>	Pat Metheny Group
1985	Best Jazz Fusion Performance	<i>First Circle</i>	Pat Metheny Group
1984	Best Jazz Fusion Performance	<i>Travels</i>	Pat Metheny Group
1983	Best Jazz Fusion Performance	<i>Offramp</i>	Pat Metheny Group
