

Leigh Barker Biography

Bassist, composer and bandleader **Leigh Barker** was born and raised in Canberra, where he spent his formative years studying with American bassist Eric Ajaye at the Canberra School of Music. His move to Melbourne in 2003 provided much professional experience, with Leigh proving to be a popular accompanist for the cream of the traditional and contemporary Jazz scenes, frequently appearing with Julie O'Hara, Jamie Oehlers, the Hoodangers, Scott Tinkler, the Fireworks Jazz Band, Joe Chindamo, Julien Wilson, Peter and Andy Baylor, the Bennetts Lane Big Band, The Band Who Knew Too Much, Heather Stewart and many others.

In January 2004 Leigh travelled to the US for five weeks, where he pursued formal studies with bassists Ben Wolfe, Eric Revis and Reginald Veal, as well as spending valuable time with mentors Branford Marsalis and guitarist Doug Wamble. In March 2010 Leigh and his band had the great privilege of being the supporting act for Branford's Australian tour. Leigh opened concerts in Perth, Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney, and performed encores with Branford at the Sydney Opera House and Queensland Performing Arts Centre. Another high profile appearance was in March 2008 when he performed in two concerts with American Tenor Saxophonist Ned Goold, who is the musical director of the Harry Connick Jr. Big Band.



In 2006 Leigh collaborated with celebrated Tasmanian pianist Tom Vincent on the soundtrack for the hit ABC television program 'The Collectors', which airs on Friday nights. Leigh now tours frequently with Tom Vincent's band, which is in demand around the world.

In 2010 Leigh was also nominated for the prestigious '**Music Council of Australia Freedman Music Fellowship**'.

Since 2003 Leigh has been consistently touring his Quintet or Quartet around Australia performing concerts of his original music, and promoting his three CD releases. "Off to Moruya" which was recorded for the ABC 'Jazztrack' program (2005), a self titled disc from 2004 and a live album named "Lynnville" (2008). These albums are available around the world through **CDbaby.com** and the **Apple iTunes** store. There are also two albums of live material available exclusively on **iTunes**, both recorded by premium film company 'Exero' at the BMW Edge theatre in Melbourne.

Despite being in constant demand as a sideman, Leigh Barker has always had as his first priority his own working band playing new original Australian music. After six years of gigs and very few line-up changes, the band has developed into a unique unit with a mature sound which belies the age of all the members. Currently a quartet, the band explores a great range of music drawing on all the greatest elements of Jazz music, from Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong and Ellington, to the classic small group music of Davis, Coltrane and Monk through to the contemporary developments of the Australian and international improvised music scenes. The wide ranging tastes of all the members and their respective contributions to the repertoire mean that the ensemble covers a wide textural and emotional range, an exciting brand of Jazz that draws on many sources. "I always have trouble explaining the sound of the group, but it's all in there, whether you like hard swing, blues, beautiful ballads, great melodies, hot Jazz or world music. The Guys all write good tunes and it has always been a combined effort..."

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