

Over the course of the past 20 years, Marshall Gilkes has established himself as one of the world's preeminent trombonists. A nonpareil artist at the forefront of brass playing, his virtuosic command of the instrument, marked by a warm and enveloping tone, Herculean chops, astounding flexibility and awe-inspiring range, place him in a league of his own.

With an incredible work ethic focused and shaped through his Juilliard training, Gilkes quickly became a force to be reckoned with, earning serious praise when he arrived on the scene near the dawn of the millennium. His debut leader date—2004's *Edenderry*—was an instant head-turner, presenting ear-catching compositions showcasing dexterous slide work and an appreciation for high-level interplay. Released on the heels of his appearance as a finalist in the 2003 Thelonious Monk Institute International Trombone Competition, it served as a clear indicator of Gilkes' emerging artistry. Broadening the scope of his imagination, he then looked toward the quintet format for 2008's *Lost Words* and 2012's *Sound Stories*.

Underscoring Gilkes' many and varied strengths on trombone, each of those early releases also highlighted his work as a composer. But it was a pair of sequential albums with Germany's WDR Big Band—an outgrowth of the trombonist's four-year tenure with that ensemble (from 2010 to 2014)—that took things to the next level. 2015's *Köln*, offering a 360-degree look at Gilkes as a writer, arranger, conductor and soloist, was a triumph of epic proportions, earning rave reviews and two Grammy nominations. An equally impressive follow-up—2018's *Always Forward*—served as a compelling companion piece, cementing his status as one of the great big band composers of the modern era.

Shifting gears after establishing his authority in the large ensemble domain, Gilkes furthered his unique musical outlook while fulfilling long-held ambitions of two very different sorts: 2020's *Waiting to Continue*, recorded when studios first reopened shortly after the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, revealed the height, depth and breadth of his powers in the piano-less trio format; and 2022's *Cyclic Journey*, uniting an all-star brass octet with a blue-chip jazz combo to present an original suite built to represent daily life in all its grounding glory, spoke to a boundless artistry.

In 2023, Gilkes and trumpeter Brandon Ridenour joined forces as co-leaders and delivered the eponymous debut from Brassology, a beyond-category brass ensemble eliminating jazz-classical divides and pushing boundaries with its art. And several months after that album arrived, in early 2024, Gilkes released *LifeSongs*, his third thrilling outing with the WDR Big Band. A breathtaking collection of material tied directly to our times, it channels the present moment both in the trombonist's personal sphere and the greater whole we all inhabit.

Through those albums, Gilkes has carved out his place as a leader of note. And with his work as a first-call sideman, in parallel to those efforts, he's demonstrated incomparable might and adaptability. Gilkes has made his mark performing and/or recording with bassist Carlos Henriquez, harpist Edmar Castañeda, the New York Philharmonic, the Brass Band of Battle Creek, Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Slide Monsters, bassist Richard Bona, pianist Makoto Ozone and numerous other top-tier musicians and outfits. And through his work with the WDR Big Band and as a longtime member of the Maria Schneider Orchestra, he's played

himself into the rich history of large ensemble music.

A marvel of musicality sought after and highly respected in both the jazz and classical worlds, Gilkes has earned his rightful place in the upper echelon of both realms. Not surprisingly, his vast experience and genre-straddling skills have made him an in-demand educator. At various points in his career, Gilkes has served on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music, Berklee College of Music and New England Conservatory of Music. In addition, he's shared his knowledge and skills through master classes, clinics, guest appearances and teaching at other venerable institutions including the Banff Center, University of North Texas, the Brubeck Institute, Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music and the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music. An S. E. Shires Artist, Gilkes performs on his signature model trombone—an instrument as versatile as its inspiration.