

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 releases also highlighted his work as a composer. But it was a pair of 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 a pair of 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.

With Gilkes' two most recent outings—2020's *Waiting to Continue* and 2022's *Cyclic Journey*—he furthered his unique musical outlook while fulfilling long-held ambitions of two very different sorts: The former, recorded when studios first reopened shortly after the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, finds him at the height of his powers, leading a piano-less trio; and the latter, 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, speaks to a boundless artistry.

Through those seven 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, Slide Monsters, bassist Richard Bona, pianist Makoto Ozone and numerous other top-tier musicians and outfits. And as a longtime member of the Maria Schneider Orchestra and the lead trombonist in the Vanguard Jazz 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, reflected by his current position on the faculty at the 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, Berklee College of Music, University of North Texas, Manhattan School of Music, 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.