

JULIEN LABRO

ACCORDIONIST~ BANDONEONIST~ COMPOSER ~ ARRANGER



Heralded as “the next accordion star,” Julien Labro has established himself as one of the foremost accordion and bandoneón players in both the classical and jazz genres. Deemed to be “a triple threat: brilliant technician, poetic melodist and cunning arranger,” his artistry, virtuosity, and creativity as a musician, composer and arranger have earned him international acclaim and continue to astonish audiences worldwide.

French-born Labro was influenced early on by traditional folk music and the melodic, lyrical quality of the French chanson. Upon discovering the music of jazz legends like Charlie Parker and Miles Davis, he quickly became inspired by the originality, freedom, creativity, and the endless possibilities in their musical language.

After graduating from the Marseille Conservatory of Music, Labro began winning international awards, taking first prize in the Coupe Mondiale in 1996 and the Castelfidardo Competitions in 1997. After sweeping first place in the Marcel Azzola, Jo Privat and Medard Ferrero competitions in 1995 and 1998, respectively, Labro moved to the United States, where he earned graduate degrees in Classical Music, Jazz Studies and Composition. During this time, he was exposed to and embraced other genres of music, ranging from pop and hip-hop to electronic/techno and rap, as well as Latin, Indian, Middle Eastern, and other types of world music. Labro draws from both his diverse academic background and eclectic musical influences in his professional life as a performer, arranger, and composer. His passion for promoting the understanding and love of music has well been recognized through his master classes at renowned institutions such as the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and the Cleveland Institute of Music.

As a musician and artist, Labro is constantly evolving. In 2015, he performed and debuted his first concerto, *Apricity*, with the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. Additionally, Labro curated an all-accordion concert for the prestigious University Musical Society (UMS) in an event entitled “The Big Squeeze: An Accordion Summit” at Hill Auditorium. Labro, once again, reunited some of the instruments’ finest players to display the versatility of the accordion and its various cousins.

Piazzolla, a major influence and the reason Labro picked up the bandoneón, is also the title of his album with classical guitarist and Grammy-award winner Jason Vieaux and A Far Cry chamber orchestra. Other releases include Grammy-award winning vocalist Cassandra Wilson’s **Another Country** and critically acclaimed Hot Club of Detroit’s **Junction**, which features many of Labro’s original compositions, revealing his wide understanding and mastery of different genres, innovative approach as well as his broad musical inspirations.

On a creative level, Labro has been enlisted as an arranger for several professional ensembles, including Ensemble Vivant of Toronto, A Far Cry, Spektral Quartet, and Curtis On Tour from the Curtis Institute of Music Faculty of Philadelphia.

Labro's musical journey has taken him around the world. His past performances include jazz venues such as Dizzy's, Birdland, SFJAZZ, Blue Note, Yoshi's, The Green Mill, and Sculler's, and festivals such as Jazz Aspen Snowmass, Detroit Jazz Festival, Jazz Salt Lake City, Fontana Chamber Arts Summer Festival, Soave Guitar Festival (IT), Quebec City Summer Festival (CA), Inchad International Cultural Festival in Constantine (AL), Byblos International Music Festival (LB), Beiteddine Art Festival (LB), Al-Qurain Culture Festival (Kuwait), and many more.

He has been a guest artist with numerous symphonies and chamber ensembles such as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Cleveland Pops Orchestra, A Far Cry, the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra, the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, the Cape Cod Symphony, the Michigan Pops Orchestra, the Linden String Quartet, the Prairie Ensemble, the Spektral Quartet and many more.

In the past, he has performed and/or collaborated with groups and artists such as Brazilian pianist João Donato, Argentinean Grammy winning composer and pianist Fernando Otero, vocalist Cassandra Wilson, clarinetist Anat Cohen, Lebanese oud master Marcel Khalife, saxophonists Miguel Zenón, James Carter, Chris Cheek, Jon Irabagon and Victor Goines, composers Du Yun and Avner Dorman, harmonica extraordinaire Howard Levy, percussionist Jamey Haddad, bandoneónist Daniel Binelli, and guitarists Howard Alden, Larry Coryell, Frank Vignola, Tommy Emmanuel, and John and Bucky Pizzarelli.

In 2012, Labro embarked on an exciting long-standing collaboration with Spektral Quartet, with whom he performed at NYC's Subculture in 2014, the International Latino Festival in Chicago, and Wheaton College, just to name a few. Their work has drawn increasing attention and was featured in a 2015 *Chamber Music America* article entitled "Art of Opportunity" by Paul Brady, who described Labro as an "A-list star" with "deep jazz cred." Their 2014 album ***From This Point Forward***, which was included in the Chicago Tribune's list of ten new significant classical album releases, is a genre bending collection of compositions from South America. In these arrangements, Labro delicately melds different genres, styles, and sounds with intricate craftsmanship that not only preserves the original essence of the pieces but also brings in fresh new twists and perspectives that introduce a new understanding and appreciation of the music for the modern day audience. Alto sax great and McArthur Fellow Miguel Zenón joined on a couple tracks.

This past season was a busy one for Labro. He was invited as an artist in residence for the Princeton University Concerts series, where he also premiered his new project, the Julien Labro Quartet. Following a "Jazz at Lincoln Center" tour throughout Mexico with Grammy nominated trumpet player, Diego Urcola, he performed at the Riverside Fine Arts series with the Spektral Quartet in Jacksonville, FL and played a concert with Frank Vignola for the Vail Jazz Winter Series in Colorado. In the Spring, Labro reunited with A Far Cry for a performance of Russian Avant-Garde composer Sofia Gubaidulina's *Fachwerk* at the Isabella Stewart

Gardner Museum in Boston, MA and participated in celebrating the inaugural season of Hope College's new performing arts center where he played music by Dutch composer Theo Loevendie. After a show in Dubai, UAE, Labro will be returning to Lebanon this summer for performances at the Batroun Festival in Lebanon, performing in the Lincoln Center's Midsummer Night Swing Festival, traveling to Colorado for the Crested Butte Music Festival and expanding upon the Julien Labro Quartet with a tour through the Midwest. Labro will be closing his Summer schedule with concerts in South Korea at the Daejeon Chamber Music Festival and several other cities.

The new season will open with a trip to Jordan for the Jordan Citadel Festival in Amman, followed by several orchestral engagements throughout the United States, including a performance with the Arkansas Symphony and Jason Vieaux as part of the ACANSA Arts Festival. Labro and Vieaux's collaboration will also result in the release of a new album entitled ***Infusion***, which will include new arrangement of music by Brouwer, Gnattali, and Metheny amongst others. On the jazz side, Labro is also working on a new project with saxophonist Jon Irabagon, and preparing for a second tour with trumpet player Diego Urcola, while continuing to perform with the Julien Labro Quartet and Hot Club of Detroit. In his free time, Labro is working on composing a new bandoneón concerto that will be a sequel to his accordion concerto *Apricity*.