

# JULIEN LABRO

ACCORDIONIST~ BANDONEONIST~ COMPOSER ~ ARRANGER



Heralded as “the next accordion star” by Howard Reich of the Chicago Tribune, 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.

Picking up the accordion at 9, 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, 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 further pursued his musical dream.

As a musician and artist, Labro is constantly evolving. Equipped with advanced degrees in classical music, jazz studies, and composition, Labro draws from his diverse academic background and eclectic musical influences as he searches for new themes and untried concepts, transforming and developing his creative ideas into new projects.

**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**. 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. ***Infusion***, Labro's latest release, marks his second collaboration with Grammy winner Jason Vieaux. It explores and stretches the repertoire with original arrangement of pieces by Brouwer, Gnattali, Metheny, and the British pop band Tears For Fears.

Labro has collaborated with numerous professional symphonies and chamber ensembles, often playing the dual roles of solo artist as well as composer/arranger. These include the conductorless Boston-based chamber orchestra, A Far Cry, Spektral Quartet, Ensemble Vivant of Toronto, and Curtis On Tour from the Curtis Institute of Music faculty of Philadelphia. He has been a guest artist with numerous symphonies and chamber ensembles such as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of St Luke's, the Arkansas Symphony, the Grand Rapids Symphony, the Cape Cod Symphony, the Crested Butte Symphony, the Cleveland Pops Orchestra, the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra, the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, The Bijou Orchestra, A Far Cry, the Linden String Quartet, the Prairie Ensemble, and many more.

Labro's musical journey has taken him all across North America, Europe, the Middle East and South America. He has performed and collaborated with groups and artists such as Hot Club of Detroit, Brazilian pianist João Donato, Argentinean Grammy winning composer and pianist Fernando Otero, big-band leader Maria Schneider, vocalist Cassandra Wilson and Kiran Ahluwalia, 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.

His past performances include venues such as Dizzy's, Birdland, SFJAZZ, Blue Note, Yoshi's, The Green Mill, and Sculler's, and festivals such as Newport Jazz Festival, Lincoln Center's Midsummer Festival, NYC Winter Jazz Festival, Vail Jazz Festival, Detroit Jazz Festival, Jazz Salt Lake City, Jazz Aspen Snowmass, Caramoor Music Festival, SF Performances, Phillips Collection, 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), Daejeon Chamber Music Festival (ROK) and many more.

Labro's 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, Princeton University, Hope College, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and many more.

After a busy summer performing all across the US at several classical and jazz festivals including the Newport Jazz Festival, Labro will open the 2017 season with a two-week tour in Finland with guitarist Olli Soikkeli, presenting music from their new release ***Rise & Grind***.

In October, Labro will reconnect with Jason Vieaux to perform in several cities across the country from New York to San Francisco. Other highlights of the season

include Labro's debut at the prestigious Gilmore Keyboard Festival, where he will be performing classical and jazz concerts with the Julien Labro Quartet, a performance at the Phillips Collection in Washington DC, and a repeat appearance at the International Classical Guitar Festival in Cleveland. In his free time, Labro is working on composing a new bandoneón concerto that will be a sequel to his accordion concerto *Apricity*.