

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* (2016), 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's latest release *Rise & Grind* (2017) with Finnish jazz guitarist Olli Soikkeli primarily features Labro's jazz compositions written especially for the project and some fresh arrangements of classical and country tunes.

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 Ensemble Vivant of Toronto, the conductorless Boston-based chamber orchestra, A Far Cry, Spektral Quartet, Arneis Quartet, 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, New World Symphony, the Hartford Symphony, the Arkansas Symphony, the Rochester Symphony, the Cleveland Pops Orchestra, the Ocean City Pops Orchestra, the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra, the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, the Cape Cod Symphony, the Grosse Pointe Symphony, the Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony, the Saginaw Symphony, the Macomb Symphony, the Bijou Orchestra, the Michigan Pops Orchestra, 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. Labro has performed, and collaborated with diverse artists such as Brazilian legend João Donato, big-band leader Maria Schneider, vocalist Cassandra Wilson, Lebanese oud master Marcel Khalife, pianists Uri Caine and Fernando Otero, classical Grammy-winner guitarist Jason Vieaux, saxophonists Paquito D'Rivera, Miguel Zenón, James Carter, Chris Cheek, Jon Irabagon and Victor Goines, clarinetist Anat Cohen, trumpeter Dominick Farinacci, composers Bryce Dessner, Du Yun and Avner Dorman, harmonica extraordinaire Howard Levy, percussionist Jamey Haddad, 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, The Stone, 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, Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland, Jazz Salt Lake City, Jazz Aspen Snowmass, Caramoor Music Festival, Chautauqua Institution, 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), Jerash International (JD), 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 zigzagging all across the US and the Middle East, Labro will open the 2019 season performing with jazz artists John Clayton, Lewis Nash, Ken Peplowski and Larry Fuller at the 25th anniversary of the Vail Jazz Festival.

Late September and October, Labro will embark on a solo tour “the Art of the Accordion” performing a solo program ranging from Bach to modern classical compositions on both bandoneon and accordion. In November, Labro will present his latest project: Julien Labro & the Chamber Collective by premiering his newest chamber work *Stationed in Ambivalence*, a 3 movements suite for bandoneon, violin, piano and contrabass. Recently commissioned by the New West Symphony, Labro’s *Canvas*, a double concerto for bandoneon, guitar, and strings will also receive its premiere later that month. In March, Labro will premiere his latest orchestral composition “*The Django Fantasy*” during the 30th edition of the Berks Jazz Festival. Commissioned by the festival to celebrate their milestone (and coincidentally Django Reinhardt’s 110th anniversary) Labro has written an orchestral suite featuring a Hot Club style ensemble acting as soloist with orchestra to be premiered on March 27th with the Reading Pops Orchestra. Other highlights of the season include performances with the Buffalo Philharmonic, bagpiper Cristina Pato from the Silk Road Ensemble, a special program with long-time collaborator and Grammy winner guitarist Jason Vieaux featuring the Ceruti String Quartet and Pablo Aslan.

In his free time, Labro is working on composing a new bandoneón concerto that will be a sequel to his accordion concerto **Apricity**. To learn more about Labro, visit <http://julienlabro.com>.