

## **Bill Gerhardt** **pianist/composer**

Born on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March, 1962 in Cape Girardeau, Missouri Gerhardt was surrounded by music in his family. His father played piano, his uncle played the drums and his aunt sang and played the piano. He began formal studies at the age of nine. His education was augmented by a family friend who introduced him to fake books when he was fifteen. In high school, he accompanied in the choral program and participated in the stage and marching bands. Gerhardt was also a student of Herb Drury in Saint Louis for two years before attending North Texas State University.

Bill Gerhardt's professional career began when he was just fifteen, playing weddings, solo piano music in local restaurants and performing everything from jazz to country with his own band. He went "on the road" at age nineteen, with a variety of commercial dance bands. With these groups, he traveled through most of the United States and had an extended engagement in the U. S. Virgin Islands. After five years, he settled in Charlotte, North Carolina to form a jazz group with bassist Ron Brendle. This group, Faction, served as a workshop for Bill, allowing him to hone his writing and arranging skills. They won the 1988 *down beat Musicfest* in Orlando and Bill was recognized for his arranging talent. In 1989, he moved to Amsterdam, the Netherlands and used that as a base for the next ten years. During that time, he traveled throughout Europe and had engagements in Africa and the Middle East.

In 1999, Bill returned to the United States and began living and working in New York. He reconnected with old musical partners in the Carolinas as well and began working with young players in Asheville to form a non-profit organization called the Jazz Composers Forum. This group presents and documents new original instrumental jazz as well as presenting workshops throughout the region. Recognized as a vital mainstay of the creative community in Western North Carolina, the Forum continues to be supported by a diverse audience and enriches the lives of both musician and listener. Gerhardt has lived in Asheville since 2002.

Bill Gerhardt has performed, recorded or played with such diverse artists as Billy Higgins, George Mraz, Billy Hart, Dave Douglas, David Liebman, Masa Kamaguchi, Michel Gentile, Ben Allison, Benny Bailey, Jeff Ballard, Clarence Becton, John Betch, Michael Blake, Jeff Brillinger, Alex Coke, Joe Daley, John Engels, Leonard Gaskin, Arjen Gorter, John Hebert, Ron Horton, Leonard Jones, Jed Levy, Tony Malaby, Ron McLure, Billy Mintz, Rutger Molenkamp, Francois Moutin, Tony Moreno, Idris Mohammed, Emily Remler, Mike Richmond, Roswell Rudd, Mike Sarin, Gary Thomas and Steve Wilson among others.

**Selected discography:**

Cotangent

- ‘Cotangent’/Sable Records
- ‘Stained Glass’/Sable Records
- ‘Thrive’/Sable Records

Pere Soto & Bill Gerhardt

- ‘Metanoic’/Riff Records
- ‘Particular Vernacular’/Planet X

Rutger Molenkamp Quartet

- ‘Four in One’/A-Records
- ‘Saturn Return’/A-Records

Jed Levy

- ‘Round and Round’/Steeplechase

Steve Altenberg

- ‘Summer’/Via

Diana Perez

- ‘7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South’/Timeless
- ‘Sunday Sketches’/Timeless

Faction

- ‘Faction’/Fact Music

John Alexander

- ‘You Need Dis’/Alexander Music

Joan Faulkner

- ‘Live Session’/IBE

Jim Brock

- ‘Trpoic Affair’/Reference Recordings