



Mark Murphy has enjoyed a prolific 40-year recording career, with over 40 releases to date. His original lyrics to “Stolen Moments,” “Red Clay” and more are known the world over. His innovative projects range from the work of Nat “King” Cole to Jack Kerouac to Ivan Lins to Eddie Jefferson. “For decades the question ‘What exactly is a jazz singer?’ has had two easy answers, Betty Carter. And Mark Murphy.” writes the *New York Post*. “He is arguably the best male jazz singer in the business,” declares Rex Reed.



Murphy is “a hipster’s hipster,” writes the *New York Post*. *Jazziz* magazine concurs, “he is one of the true remaining jazz hipsters of our time.” “Mark has devoted a long career to singing the hippest music with the best musicians,” states Leonard Feather. “Consider the company he has kept on records. In the ‘60s, Clark Terry, Dick Hyman, Roger Kellaway. In the ‘70s, David Sanborn and the Brecker Brothers. In the ‘80s, Frank Morgan, Richie Cole and the Azymuth Trio. Consider the jazzmen to whose instrumental works he has composed and sung lyrics: Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Pat Metheny, Charlie Parker, McCoy Tyner, Charles Mingus, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter.”

It was Sammy Davis, Jr. who first discovered the young Mark Murphy in 1953 at a jam session in Murphy’s hometown of Syracuse, New York. Impressed with Murphy’s talent, Davis invited him to his show that night, where he asked Mark to join him on stage. Davis -- to whom Murphy devoted his Muse release, “What a Way to Go” -- was supportive of Mark throughout the years and was responsible for getting Murphy on the “Tonight Show” with Steve Allen. It was Allen’s composition, “This Could Be the Start of Something Big,” that Mark recorded a hit rendition of in 1959.

Mark Murphy was born into a musical family in Syracuse, NY, and raised in nearby Fulton. He sang in the church choir, where his grandmother and aunt played organ, and began piano lessons at the age of seven years. Murphy’s uncle introduced him to jazz through the recordings of pianist Art Tatum. In his teens Mark sang with his brother’s dance band, then went on to study acting and music at Syracuse University. He moved to New York City, where he appeared with the Filbert and Sullivan Light Opera Company and performed in amateur contests at the legendary Apollo Theater.

Murphy’s recording career began at the age of 24 with his first release, *Meet Mark Murphy*, on the Decca label. Producer Orrin Keepnews recalls Murphy’s early recordings as “timeless...it’s remarkable how fully developed as an artist Mark was so early on. He was *born* with his incredible rhythmic sense. And he’s matured throughout the years, his vocal powers remain undiminished.” In 1958 Murphy moved to Los Angeles and recorded for Capitol.

He returned to New York in the early ‘60s and did the now classic jazz recording “Rah” on the Riverside label, featuring legendary jazz players Bill Evans, Clark Terry, Urbie Green, Blue Mitchell and Wynton Kelly. This album has been recently reissued by Fantasy Records. Mark’s favorite recording to date, “That’s How I Love the Blues,” soon followed. In 1963 Murphy hit the charts across the country with his single of “Fly Me To the Moon” and was voted “New Star of the Year” in *Downbeat Magazine’s Reader’s Poll*.

With the advent of the Beatles in the early 1960s, work for jazz singers started to dry up in the U.S. Murphy moved to London, England in the late ‘60s where he worked primarily as an actor. Mark continued however, to cultivate his jazz audience in Europe. He returned to the States in 1972 and began recording an average of an album a year for over fourteen years on the Muse label. These projects -- including the highly acclaimed *Nat King Cole Songbook Vol. I and II*, *Bop for Kerouac I and II*, *Living Room*, *Satisfaction Guaranteed*, *Beauty And the Beast* and his classic, *Stolen Moments* -- garnered widespread critical acclaim and numerous Grammy nominations. In 1987, Mark recorded *Night Mood*, an album of songs by Brazilian composer Ivan Lins, followed by the Grammy-nominated *September Ballads* on Milestone Records. Mark is appreciated by DJs like Gilles Peterson and Jazzanova, he has appeared on releases by the bands U.F.O. and 4Hero, collaborations that served notice to the acid-jazz and hip-hop fans too that Mark Murphy is the real thing.



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VITA

Mark Murphy's coterie of fans also includes tap dancer Gregory Hines, who spontaneously jumped up on stage at Mark's Las Vegas engagement in 1995 to join him for an impromptu duet. Vocal greats Betty Carter, Peggy Lee, Cleo Laine and Shirley Horn all sing or sang Murphy's praises as one of the best in the business.

Mark Murphy continues to tour internationally year round, appearing at festivals, concerts, in the best jazz clubs and on television programs throughout the U.S., Europe, Australia and Japan. He is one of the most important, and yes, *hippest*, jazz vocalists of our time. His secret? "There's a party goin' on in Mark's head," declares fan *Liza Minelli*, "and I want to go to it!"