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VANA GIERIG

Werner "Vana" Gierig is one of New York's premier jazz pianists and composers. His award-winning, virtuosic performance style and musical direction has been recognized worldwide and has been integral to many international tours and recordings by artists such as Regina Carter, Rachelle Ferrell, Lena Horne, Ute Lemper, George Howard, Special EFX, Najee, Warren Hill, Will Downing, and many others.

2 years ago, Vana was presented by legendary bassist Eddie Gomez as an outstanding next generation pianist in a special 3-day presentation at the Iridium Jazz Club in Manhattan. He consequently sold out 2 shows at the New York Blue Note and opened up for Dionne Warwick with his critically acclaimed quartet called Vana Trio plus Brazilian Percussion, a unique mix of musical cultures, mixing classic jazz piano trio with New York funk, Brazilian, as well as European influences. He has since been touring special projects evolving around this core Vana Trio, such as the Vana Trio plus Brazilian Percussion, as well as his new project of the Vana Trio plus Strings. He has been presenting both, most recently in concerts in Istanbul, Lisbon, Espinho (Portugal) and New York.

After his critically acclaimed debut CD *Small Regrets* and the follow-up *A New Day* (Twinz Records), which charted for weeks in the top of the Jazz Radio Charts, Vana is working on several releases this year. Promotional copies of his live CD have just been shipped, and he is working on a DVD release, as well an upcoming studio recording, involving Vana's group plus Strings.

Vana was also a featured pianist and composer on the 2006 NPR Jazz Christmas CD, *Marian McPartland & Friends*, for which he co-wrote *The Moon on Christmas Eve* with Kathryn Williams.

In 2004, he won the SESAC Performance Activity Award for his composition *Healing In Foreign Lands* on a #1 Album, which *Downbeat Magazine* called "divine" and "a luminous testimony to Vana's sizable talent."

HBO's *Sex and the City* solicited Vana in 2003 to compose and record a special piece for the season finale with Sarah Jessica Parker & Mikhail Baryshnikov.

In 2007, Showtime's TV series *The L Word*, chose his composition and recording of *An Awakening Thought* for one of their episodes.

Vana was executive producer, artistic musical director, composer and pianist on Regina Carter's #1 album *Paganini: After a Dream* (Verve/Universal). He was deeply involved in the vision and realization of the historic idea for Regina to become the first non-classical musician allowed to perform on Paganini's priceless violin, and it was to become the only instrumental #1 album on the Billboard charts in years. The recording, as well as the historic concerts at Lincoln Center in New York and in Genoa were extensively covered by CBS' *60 Minutes II* (Charlie Rose), NPR's *All Things Considered*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Oprah Winfrey's O Magazine*, *Downbeat*, *JazzTimes*, and countless other media.

Vana has also been commissioned twice by the prestigious Wharton Center for the Performing Arts at Michigan State University. He premiered both pieces at The Wharton Center, "Morning Cadence" in April '04 with the Regina Carter Quintet, and "Açai" in October '02, with his Vana Trio Plus Brazilian Percussion.

For 9 years, Vana had been an integral part of the Regina Carter Quintet, and is featured on most of her CD's, including *Paganini: After a Dream*, *Motor City Moments* (feat. James Carter, Russell Malone, Lewis Nash a.o.) and *Rhythms of the Heart* (feat. Cassandra Wilson, Peter Washington, Lewis Nash a.o.).

In 2002, Vana performed with the Boston Pops in a concert called *The Fiddler's Three*. He also appeared with other symphony orchestras throughout the US and Europe.



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He has also musical directed a special gala event for King Hassan II of Morocco at his palace in Marrakech that included royalty from all over the world.

Vana has given many master-classes in the United States and Europe with his group, as well as with Melissa Walker, Regina Carter and Ute Lemper. Together with Regina he worked with underprivileged public school students in an inspiring jazz education tour called Harman: How to Listen. Through this program, sponsored by Harman International Industries and created by Wynton Marsalis, Vana visited 12 states to bring the art of jazz to American children for whom arts education is underfunded.

Vana's compositions have also been solicited by the Emmy award-winning PBS program City Arts and BET's Bet on Jazz, among others. Three of his compositions from his CD Small Regrets are featured on the soundtrack of the independent motion picture Sins of Fate. The highly acclaimed European TV channel Arte featured Vana and his group in a profile, Werner Vana Gierig - Jazz pianist in New York City, on Europe's most-watched cultural program Metropolis. His countless live TV performances include a 2002 PBS appearance on An Evening with the Boston Pops. BET's Jazz Central, Treffpunkt Kultur on ORF 2 in Austria, CBS' 60 Minutes II, CNN and PBS and A&E live appearances, NBC's Today Show, FOX and Telemundo Live from the Blue Note in New York, Nancy Wilson's show and numerous international TV appearances incl. Japan, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Curaçao, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Holland, England, etc.

Performed, and/or recorded with:

Eddie Gomez
Regina Carter (Verve & Atlantic)
Lena Horne (Blue Note)
Rachelle Ferrell (Blue Note)
Ute Lemper (Universal)
Miroslav Vitous
B-52's
George Howard (GRP)
Paquito d'Rivera
James Carter
Marcus Belgrave
Russell Malone
Lewis Nash
Najee (EMI/Capitol)
Warren Hill (Discovery)
Cassandra Wilson (for Verve/Regina Carter)
Rodney Jones (Blue Note)
Omar Hakim
Will Downing (Mercury)
Kirk Whalum (Columbia)
Angela Bofill (Jive/BMG)
Paul Jackson Jr.
John Blake
Bob Berg
Special EFX (GRP)
Marion Meadows (Discovery)
Chieli Minucci (JVC)
Vesta Williams
Roy Ayers



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Performed, and/or recorded with (continued)

Peter White (Colombia)
Kenny Davis
Eddie Gomez
Jeff "Tain" Watts
Peter Washington
Buddy Williams
Ralph Armstrong
Raoul De Souza
Kai Eckhardt
Roy Louis
Donny McCaslin
Mark Ledford
Munyango Jackson
Rebecca Parris
Bob Moses
Morris Pleasure
Mark Whitfield
Keith Robinson
Michael Rosen
Jojo Mayer
and many more.

Discography, featuring Vana (Werner "Vana" Gierig) as performer and/or composer and/or producer:

Vana Trio plus Brazilian Percussion - live
Avenue C Records, 2007 (pre-release copies available, expected in stores by August '07)
Featuring Gene Jackson (dr), Sean Conly (bs) and Vinicius Barros (perc). Recorded live at the Burghausen Jazz Festival 2006.

Ute Lemper - Blood & Feathers, CD & DVD, Live from The Café Carlyle in New York City.
DRG/Koch, June 2005. Featuring Vana (pno), Mark Lambert (gtr), Gregory Jones (bs), Todd Turkisher (dr).

Vana - A New Day
Twinz Records / Avenue C Records co-production, May 2003. (produced, and arranged entire CD, composed all but one piece). Featuring Alvester Garnett (dr) and Sean Conly (bs). Special guests include Regina Carter (vln & voc), Duduka Da Fonseca (perc), Vinicius Barros (perc), Adriano Santos (perc), Gino Sitson (voc), Philip Hamilton (voc), Mark Lambert (voc), Susana Ribeiro (voc), Christophe Schweizer (tbn).

Regina Carter's - Paganini: After a Dream
Verve/Universal, April 2003 (Vana is executive producer, artistic musical director, co-producer, pianist and a composer on this historic album. As executive producer, Vana was deeply involved in the vision and realization of the idea for Regina to become the first non-classical musician to be allowed to perform on Paganini's world-famous Guarneri violin, a priceless Italian national treasure under constant guard, now owned by the city of Genoa. This included intensive negotiations with the city of Genoa and various Italian institutions to gain approval for the recording (as well as the historic concert a year earlier) which was covered by the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, NPR's All Things Considered, CBS' 60 Minutes II (Charlie Rose), Oprah Winfrey's O Magazine, Downbeat and JazzTimes magazines and countless other media.

Jiro Yoshida - Mrs. Robinson
Twinz Records, 2003. Featuring Jiro Yoshida (gtr, voc), Vana (pno, synth), Carl Carter (bs, voc)
Gene Lake jr. (dr), Philip Hamilton (voc)



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Vana - Small Regrets

Avenue C Records, 1999 (produced, composed and arranged entire CD). Featuring Marcus McLaurine (bs), Rocky Bryant (dr) and guests.

Regina Carter - Motor City Moments

Verve/Universal, 2000. Featuring Vana (pno), Alvester Garnett (dr), Mayra Casales (perc), Darryl Hall (bs). Guests include Lewis Nash (dr), Russell Malone (gtr), Marcus Belgrave (tpt), James Carter (sax) a.o.

Audio Caviar - Transoceanic

Encanto Pacific Entertainment Group, 2002. A project featuring Morris Pleasure and Ralph Johnson (from Earth Wind & Fire) and many guest, incl. Vana, George Duke, Jonathan Butler and many more.

Chieli Minucci (Special EFX) - Sweet On You

Shanachie Jazz, 2000. Featuring Chieli Minucci (gtr), Vana (pno), Gerald Albright (sax), Dave Mann (sax), Jerry Brooks and Fernando Saunders (bass), Philip Hamilton (perc), Armsted Christian (voc) a. o.

Regina Carter - Rhythms Of The Heart

Verve/Universal, May 1999. Featuring Vana (pno), Lewis Nash (dr), Peter Washington (bs), Cassandra Wilson (voc), Rodney Jones (gtr) a.o.

Michael Rosen - Sweet Lingering

July 1999 (Vana produced and performed on entire CD, composed and arranged on it); with Marcus McLaurine (bs), Cyro Baptista (perc), George Gray (dr), Mark Lambert (gtr).

Mark Lambert - More Than Friends

Chartmaker Records, 1999 (performed on entire CD, co-produced 1 song); with Gregory Jones (bs), Kim Plainfield (dr), Carol Chaikin (sax), Charles Descarfino (perc).

Gabriela Anders - Wanting

Warner Brothers, 1998. Produced by George Duke and Alain Mallet.

Warren Hill - Life Thru Rose Colored Glasses

Discovery Records, 1998

Carol Chaikin - Lucy's Day Off

Miss Ecstasy Records, 1998 (performed on entire CD and co-wrote the song "Fatslap"). Also featuring Gene Lake (dr), Gregory Jones (bs), Mark Lambert (gtr), Henry Hey (keyb).

Regina Carter - Something For Grace

Atlantic Records, 1997 (performed on CD; co-wrote and co-produced the song "Reflections"). Also featuring Tracy Wormworth (bs), Rocky Bryant (dr), Mayra Casales (perc) a.o.

Warren Hill - Shelter

Discovery Records, 1997

Marion Meadows - Forbidden Fruit

RCA Records, 1994 (produced and co-wrote the song "Nocturnal Serenade")

Angela Bofill - I Wanna Love Somebody

Zomba/Jive/BMG Records, 1993

Marion Meadows - Keep It Right There

RCA Records, 1992 (performed on CD; wrote "Passion Intro Song")



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Najee - Tokyo Blue
Capital/EMI Records, 1990 (this album went Gold; Vana also spoke on it in two languages - French and German)

Najee - Just An Illusion
Capital/EMI Records, 1991 (this album went Gold)

Nancy Monroe - Dance My Heart
MJA Records, 1992; with Eddie Gomez (bs), Bob Moses (dr) a.o.

Shynia Ueshima -
Disk Union Records, 1991

Alex Merck and Painted Birds - Minds and Bodies
Demon Records, 1985. Also featuring Raul de Souza (tb), Kai Eckhardt (bs), Ichiro Onoe (dr) a.o.

Television appearances include:

Countless live appearances on international television stations, covering Vana's jazz festival appearances with his group or others (e.g. Dutch TV from the North Sea Jazz Festival, French TV from the Nice and Marciac festivals, Italian TV from the Umbria Jazz Festival, BBC from Breckon Jazz Festival, etc.). Other international TV appearances include Japan, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Curaçao, and many more.

2007 Istanbul TV interview and live performance excerpt.

2006 BR German Public Television, 90 min. live festival performance on Jazz Oder Nie.

2003 live performance and interview with his Vana Trio on the Eyewitness News Sunday Morning show from New York City (Channel 7).

2003 appearance on CBS' 60 Minutes II,

2003 live appearance on A&E's Sunday morning Breakfast Arts program.

2003 live appearance on CBS' Saturday Morning News Show.

2002 PBS performance on An Evening with the Boston Pops.

2001 solo piano performance on Treffpunkt Kultur on ORF 2 in Austria.

On BET giving a lecture/demonstration concert at Berklee College of Music in Boston (of which he holds a Bachelor's Degree) in duo with Regina Carter, 2001.

Performing on CNN live from Hugh Hefner's Playboy Mansion, in support of the famed Playboy Jazz Festival, 2000.

Numerous appearances on PBS (Public Broadcast Systems): live from the Newport Jazz Festival '98, live from the Newport Jazz Festival '94, live from the Jacksonville Jazz Festival '91.

Premier Jazz appearances on BET(Black Entertainment Television): 1997 live from J&R Jazz Festival, New York City, 1995 with Regina Carter at Jazz Central, 1995 live from Capital Jazz Festival with Warren Hill, 1994 with Will Downing at Jazz Central.



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Twice on the NBC Today Show, also FOX Morning News. FOX and TELEMUNDO, Live from the Blue Note in New York Nancy Wilson's Red, Hot & Cool Show.

Talk show appearances at the Arsenio Hall Show, Joan Rivers Show, CNBC/America's Talking Network, Telethon with Jerry Lewis and Ben Vereen, etc.

Education:

Master Degree from New England Conservatory in Boston.

Bachelor Degree from Berklee College of Music in Boston.

Diploma, Joe Haider Jazz School, Munich/Germany.

High School Diploma with Classical Piano Major, Gymnasium Pullach, Munich/Germany.

Awards:

Oct. 25th, 2004, Vana received the National Performance Activity Award from SESAC (Org. for performing rights) for his composition Healing In Foreign Lands on a 2003 #1 Album, Paganini: After A Dream, which he also co-produced and musical directed.

2003 Outstanding Achievement In Songwriting Award in the Great American Song Contest for an original christmas jazz song entitled 'Tis the Season of the Year (co-written with Kathryn Williams).

Named a semi-finalist in the 2003 International Songwriting Competition (ISC) for his composition Low Features from his A New Day release. There were 11,000 entries from all over the world. The judges for jazz were Pat Metheny, Arif Mardin and Bruce Lundvall.

1986 Award from the Boston Jazz Society for "Outstanding Achievements in Jazz".

Awarded "Best Live Performance, 1994" in Europe with Will Downing under Werner "Vana" Gierig's musical direction.