

Michael “Patches” Stewart Biography

New Orleans-born **Michael “Patches” Stewart** blows from the summit of today’s trumpet players. His resume and affiliations encompass the finest of musicians recognized around the globe, including **Quincy Jones, George Duke, Marcus Miller, Earth Wind & Fire, Lenny White** and Al Jarreau.

More importantly, “Patches” has just recorded his eagerly anticipated first CD in 8 years - his career 4th, *On Fire*: a tight 8-song affair documenting a scintillating wood-shedding collaboration between musicians in Warsaw, Poland (where Patches has lived for the last couple of years) with key American compatriots such as saxophonist **Kenny Garrett**, vocalist **Raul Midón**, drummer **Poogie Bell** and guitarist **Paul Jackson, Jr.** Four songs stem from the pen of Polish bassist/multi-instrumentalist **Robert Kubiszyn** (including the evocative “Northern Star”) while another standout is “Child in Me,” among the last songs and placements by New York’s late great keyboard master **Donald Blackman**. The album is titled *On Fire* because everything from the writing to the recording sessions was accomplished under fire...under time-pressed circumstances where passion met fleeting opportunity. Duly, every song is passionate and purposeful...no filler!

“I have a nice fan base in Europe,” Patches explains. “People know me more there than in the U.S. Since I’ve been in Poland, I hooked up with saxophonist **Henryk Miśkiewicz** as a guest in his band, **Full Drive**. That gave me the idea to do a CD with Polish and American musicians - uniting two musical worlds and blurring the lines - *without boundaries*.” Patches’ new CD – also featuring **Dorota Miśkiewicz** singing vocalese, **Pawel Tomaszewski** on keyboards and **Marek Napiórkowski** on acoustic guitar - is hiply engaging, aurally warm and eminently listenable.

Patches loved trumpet at a young age but did not have the opportunity to play or study the instrument of his dreams until middle school. Once able, he practiced with a focus rarely seen in one so young resulting in the Musical Director of St. Augustine High School to reserve a full scholarship for him. Patches made his major recording debut at 16 playing in the horn section on **LaBelle**’s **Allen Toussaint**-produced classic “Lady Marmalade” in 1974. Upon high school graduation – though he had scholarships on the table from Berklee School of Music and more - Patches passed on them all, headed to Los Angeles and got busy.

Patches grabbed the attention of the great **Quincy Jones** who took him on tour behind his *The Dude* LP in the early `80s. This was followed by work with artists ranging from English groove collective **Soul II Soul** to bohemian rocker **Rickie**

Lee Jones to soulful divas **Diana Ross and Whitney Houston**. Patches' first recordings as a leader were for the Hip Bop label: the acoustic jazz standards project *Blue Patches* (1997) and the electrified *Penetration* (1998). He is most vividly recalled for the 8 years he spent on the road with **Al Jarreau** followed by 16 years in the cutting edge band of bass chameleon **Marcus Miller** who was heavily instrumental in the making of Patches' third CD, *Blow* (2005).

Poignantly, Patches was extensively mentored by the great **George Duke** who he often recorded with – from the boundary smashing legend's 1993 symphonic project *Muir Woods Suite*, all the way up to playing on four selections from Duke's final album in 2013, *DreamWeaver*: the standout 15-and-a-half minute workout "Burnt Sausage," the autobiographical "Trippin'," "Jazzmatazz," and the bluesy **Teena Marie** vocal gem "Ball and Chain." Duke's *DreamWeaver* debuted at #1 on the contemporary jazz chart. As an honored guest, Duke lent among his final recorded performances to Patches' *On Fire* album, lending his signature Fender Rhodes and Moog synthesizers on "Northern Star" in ways that are both familiar and, in otherworldly magnificence...next level.

Now Patches is funneling all of his creativity, passion and experience into fresh musical encounters on his latest disc, *On Fire*, with plans to touch down in other parts of the world. It's all in the master plan to move with humble fortitude out of the sideman background into the honestly earned realm of fully rounded artist in a cool blue spotlight all his own.

- A. Scott Galloway