

Joe Policastro

Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, Joe Policastro, double bassist, began studying piano at the age of five but switched to the bass at age twelve. He studied classically with Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra bassist Rick Vizachero, and grew up in the Cincinnati jazz scene under artists such as Concorde recording artist, Cal Collins, and Stan Kenton drummer, John Von Ohlen. He studied Classical Double Bass Performance on full scholarship at Miami University where he was a recipient of both the String Department Award and the Orchestra Award. As a recipient of the Hugh Hoffman Scholarship, Joe earned his Bachelor of Music in Jazz/Studio Music from the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. Joe also earned a Master of Music in Jazz Studies.

After leaving Cincinnati in 2002, Joe lived and worked as a jazz performer in Berlin, Germany. Early in 2003, he moved to Chicago where he quickly established himself an in-demand musical voice as both performer and composer/arranger. He has shared the stage with jazz luminaries such as Diane Schuur, Jeff Hamilton, Howard Levy, Phil Woods, Tim Ries, Ira Sullivan, Howard Alden, Rick Margitza, Jim Snidero, David "Fathead" Newman, and Billy Hart, and he is featured on numerous recordings by Chicago artists. He has regularly appeared with notable Chicago groups and performers such as Chris Foreman, Judy Roberts, Andy Brown, the Chicago Jazz Orchestra, Paul Marinaro, Joel Paterson, Petra van Nuis, Kimberly Gordon, and Rose Colella.

In addition to his work as a bassist, Joe is also active as a composer/arranger. He leads the Joe Policastro Trio, and the group has two albums featuring his writing, arranging, and performing: 2013's *West Side Story Suite For Jazz Trio* and 2016's *Pops!* He also leads and co-leads the Gerry Mulligan-esque ensembles, Jeru, and the Mulligan Mosaics Big Band and Mulligan Mosaics Nonet in partnership with baritone saxophonist Ted Hogarth and the Gerry and Franca Mulligan Foundation, ensembles for which he has extensively written and arranged. As composer/arranger, his work can be heard on recordings by numerous artists including Ira Sullivan and the Rob Parton Big Band.

As an educator, Joe has been a Ravinia Jazz Mentor, a Lecturer of Jazz Studies at DePaul University, and he is currently on faculty at Morton College, the Chicago Academy For The Arts, and the Midwest Young Artists Conservatory. Although he is predominantly a jazz performer, Joe is also active as a studio and stage musician and can be seen and heard in pit orchestras, chamber ensembles, and a variety of popular music groups. He is happy to make Chicago his home along with his wife, Marie, his children, Ava and Anthony, and his dog, Fritz.