

Considered one of the nation's top-call jazz trumpeters, Gilbert Castellanos is a renowned musician, composer, educator and arranger. Skilled with impressive dexterity and control, his clarity of expression and improvisational fluency moves audiences with a seemingly profound effortlessness and complexly emotive affect.

Born in Guadalajara, Mexico, and raised in Fresno, California, Gilbert's musical career was preordained; the only son to his eponym father, a touring Cumbia band leader, singer and arranger, Gilbert was strongly influenced by his predecessor's deep appreciation for classical composers and big band jazz ensembles, broadening young Gilbert's horizons from an early age. Gilbert Sr. strongly encouraged Gilbert toward the Jazz genre when at first he showed an interest in trumpet at age 6. By age 11, Gilbert's intensive training and education provided the context to begin playing professionally, and at age 15 he preformed with mentor and icon Dizzy Gillespie at the Monterrey Jazz Festival.

After completing his formal music education at two of the nation's most renowned music conservatories, Berklee College of Music in Boston and Cal Arts in Los Angeles, Castellanos quickly gained international acclaim as a member of the celebrated band Black/Note, with whom he recorded three albums: L.A. Underground (Red Records), Jungle Music (Columbia Records) and Nothin' But the Swing (Impulse Records). His solo recording career since Black/Note has seen Castellanos thrive as a player, bandleader, composer and arranger on three acclaimed albums: 1999's self-titled debut release The Gilbert Castellanos Hammond B3 Quartet, followed by 2006's Underground (Seedling Records) and 2013's The Federal Jazz Project (Dobie Music). Castellanos is currently in post-production for his next album, Espérame en el Cielo, an homage to both his Mexican heritage and his championing over adversity.

In 2009, Castellanos was highlighted on internationally acclaimed DownBeat Magazine's "25 For The Future" list, firmly establishing him as one of the nation's most inventive Jazz trumpeters. With a proven reputation for improvisation, Gilbert has toured extensively as a former member of the Tom Scott Quintet, the Anthony Wilson Nonet, Charles McPherson Quintet and Willie Jones III Quintet; he remains a recording member of the Clayton Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Jeff Goldblum & The Mildred Snitzer Orchestra, and of course as a headliner under his own name. As a proponent for West Coast Jazz, Gilbert works tirelessly to build San Diego as an internationally recognized hub for Jazz. Partnering with several San Diego institutions, Castellanos has been a dynamic force in establishing a committed fan-base served by a growing number of dedicated venues, all of which defer to his artistic curation. Through it all, recording, studio work, touring, curating, performing, Gilbert has maintained his dedication to "keeping Jazz alive" and continues his work promoting and growing the potentials of his creativity, the genre and his peers as a respected Godfather of sorts across the West Coast.

A fierce advocate of formal jazz education, Gilbert held the position of Adjunct Professor of Jazz Studies at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music from 2001 to 2013. Thereafter, he served as the Artistic Director of the International Academy of Jazz San Diego from 2014-2016, during which time he began conducting high school workshops and developing a more proactive role in mentorship. During his time visiting Title I schools, he recognized a need for increased accessibility to formal education, noting that many truly gifted students were deprived the opportunities to further their education due to monetary constraints. Thusly, in 2016 Castellanos founded the Young Lions Jazz Conservatory based in San Diego, California. Using his influence in a burgeoning Jazz community, one he is credited in large with establishing, Gilbert began successfully soliciting donations for and supporting thousands of dollars of scholarship to finance Conservatory Education Equity for economically disadvantaged

students of promise. To date, the Young Lions Jazz Conservatory has graduated hundreds of bright musicians of diverse backgrounds with Gilbert serving as personal mentor and advocate for each, often writing college recommendation letters and offering every one of his students "real world" experience each Wednesday evening at ensemble performances through a partnership with San Diego Museum of Art and affiliate venue Panama 66.

Partnerships:

Jazz @ The Jacobs, Artistic Curator
The San Diego Symphony, Artistic Jazz Curator
The San Diego Ballet, Resident Composer

Awards and Acclaim for Gilbert Castellanos:

"[Castellanos] plays with élan, evincing a more individual, ever-large sound offering hard swinging, often ear-grabbing solos...[proving] that music with deep roots in jazz's glorious '50s and '60s can sound completely contemporary today."
- Zan Stewart, Los Angeles Times

"[Castellanos] always finds new life and new energy to breathe into the notes I write and the grooves we play with him."
- John Clayton, Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Ensemble

DownBeat Magazine's 25 For The Future

San Diego Music Awards (SDMA) Jazz Album of the Year for Underground

SDMA Jazz Album of the Year for The Federal Jazz Project

SDMA Artist of the Year for 2013

SDMA Jazz Artist of the Year for 2017, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2002, 2001

San Diego City Beat Magazine Best Jazz Band/Musician 2017 and 2016

San Diego Youth Symphony & Conservatory Top Music Educator

San Diego Theater Critics Circle's Craig Noel Award for Outstanding Musical Performance in A Play for The Federal Jazz Project

Performing and Recording Credits (Abbreviated):

Dizzy Gillespie
Quincy Jones
Wynton Marsalis
Horace Silver
Christian McBride

Lewis Nash
Oscar Hernandez
Les McCann
Diana Krall
Willie Nelson
Michael Buble
Natalie Cole
American Idol
Jeff Goldblum

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