

Gilles NATUREL

Gilles Naturel was born in 1960 into a family of musicians. At three years old, he began playing the flute, and at six years old, he began taking private lessons on the piano with Madame JACQUINET, who had been the teacher of his mother, Madeleine NATUREL, herself a professor of music. His father, conductor François NATUREL, was the recipient of the gold medal in Music Theory from the Conservatoire National Supérieur in Paris. His maternal grandfather, René PASQUET, played the violin non-professionally.

In 1968, Gilles entered the 'Ecole DECROLY, in which his father was Professor of Music. He sang in the choir, and also directed some short films in 16mm, improvising and recording the music for the soundtracks.

At the age of eight, Gilles began to study the violin, playing in the Conservatory Orchestra of the 12th Arrondissement of Paris. He performed professionally for the first time as a violinist in a series of performances of, « ORPHEE AUX ENFERS » by Jacques OFFENBACH at the OPERA COMIQUE at the age of 13. The next year, at the age of 14, Gilles entered the Lycée Paul VALERY, discovered Jazz and became entranced with the music of Charlie PARKER. He taught himself the double bass and began performing in 1976 et 1977, with drummer Georges BROWN, and guitarist Philippe ACQUENIN at "Chez EUGENE", located at the Place du Tertre in the Montmartre section of Paris.

At the same time, Gilles was a brilliant student and received his Baccalauréat degree with Honors in 1977 and continued his studies in Biology at the University of PARIS 7(Jussieu) receiving his Masters Degree in 1982. He left home and moved in with his wife Patricia, with whom he has two children. In 1983, after a year in the Graduate School of Ecology at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Paris, rue d'Ulm, Gilles, made the decision to realize his dream of becoming a professional Jazz bassist. He began to perform regularly at the Hotel MERIDIEN in Paris, porte Maillot with a group called the "SLAPSCATS" – featuring André VILLEGGER and Daniel HUCK, saxophones, Patrick BACQUEVILLE trombone, and Patrick DIAZ, guitar. The group would also accompany visiting American musicians including artists such as Slim GAILLARD et Joe NEWMAN.

In 1986, the year of the birth of his first son, Joël, Gilles joined guitarist André CONDOUANT's quartet, with Steve GROSSMAN as guest, Georges BROWN on drums and Alain JEAN-MARIE on piano performing in Paris. He then met Jean-Loup LONGNON and performed with him from 1986 to 1989 in his big band and sextet. He became the regular bassist for Barney WILEN from 1989 to 1996, touring internationally and recording four CDs. En 1988 Gilles recorded his first CD with Manda DJINN: "You go to my head"(Nocturne 1989), which also marked the beginning of a thirty-year collaboration with pianist Alain JEAN-MARIE.

Gilles began to play regularly in the Jazz Clubs of Paris, at the PETIT OPPORTUN, at the SUNSET, at La VILLA, also travelling abroad playing with prestigious musicians such as Johnny GRIFFIN, Lee KONITZ, Steve GROSSMAN, Tom HARRELL, Horace PARLAND, Benny GOLSON, Eddy HENDERSON, Ray BRYANT, Jeanne LEE and Junior MANCE. He recorded a great number of CDs during that time.

He met pianist John DAVIS at the PETIT OPPORTUN club in Paris who invited Gilles to join him in NEW YORK in 1993. After returning to Paris, he toured with guitarist Peter BERNSTEIN in the South of France.

In between concerts, he studied classical harmony, and wrote an arrangement for string orchestra of the song, "Two lonely people" composed by Bill EVANS, for a concert with Toots THIELEMANS as soloist.

In 1996 he formed a jazz quintet for which he composed the music and recorded his first CD under his own name, NATUREL (JMS/Sony), with his brother Guillaume NATUREL saxophone, Jacky TERRASSON piano, Simon GOUBERT drums, and Stéphane BELMONDO trumpet. The CD was nominated for an award by the Académie du Jazz. In 1998, he recorded and produced a second CD under his own name, "TROP TARD" (Houdin Records) in a sextet - with Flavio BOLTRO, trumpet, Yannick RIEUX, Saxophone, Jean-Paul ADAM, saxophone, Alain JEAN-MARIE, piano and Philippe SOIRAT, drums - for which he composed the music.

In 1998 he accompanied Kenny WERNER at La VILLA in Paris in a trio with John BETSCH. To his delight, Kenny invited him to perform with him at the Festival d'ANTIBES- JUAN LES PINS in a quartet featuring Joe LOVANO, and Billy HART.

He is the regular bassist with the Sarah LAZARUS quartet, as well as with the VOICE MESSENGERS.

In 2000 he recorded, produced and composed the music for a third CD with his quintet called « L'AIR DE PARIS » (Houdin Records) featuring Guillaume NATUREL, Alexandre TASSEL, Frank AVITABLE, and Dré PALLMAERTS.

In 2003 he performed at LINCOLN CENTER in NEW YORK with Hervé SELLIN, Jon GORDON, Brian LYNCH, and Steve DAVIS during an exceptional evening which included Martial SOLAL and Steve LACY.

He performed regularly in Europe with the Quartet of Johnny GRIFFIN and Kirk LIGHTSEY, as well as with the quartet of Rick MARGITZA.

In 2005, he had a magical encounter with Lenny POPKIN, saxophone, and Carol TRISTANO, drums, at the SEPT LEZARDS club in Paris with whom he has recorded several CDs and tours regularly in Europe. Gilles was very touched by Lenny's musicality and humanity, and recorded a double CD: one with Lenny POPKIN and Philippe SOIRAT, one with Rick MARGITZA: «BELLEVILLE» (Cristal records). This CD was also nominated for an award by The Academy of Jazz in January of 2008. Then, towards the end of 2008 he went on an international tour with STACEY KENT, bringing along his violin which he practiced in hotel rooms in between concerts. Returning to Paris, he founded and directs a small baroque ensemble with his son Antoine NATUREL, born in 1989, a graduate of the National Conservatory of Paris in harpsichord, and the mezzo-soprano Morena FATTORINI. He plays the violin regularly with his family's Baroque orchestra and for which he learned to make gut strings for the contrabass and the violin. He plays the violin regularly with his family's Baroque orchestra and for which he learned to make gut strings for the contrabass and the violin.. He composed a « Stabat Mater » for soprano, « L'AIR DE PARIS » (Houdin Records), a concerto for solo violin and 12 stringed instruments, five string quartets and a string quintet. Fascinated by the study of counterpoint, in 2010, Gilles composed and recorded the music for the first CD of the "CONTRAPUNTIC JAZZ BAND" (Space time records). This CD was also nominated for an award by the Academy of Jazz.

Gilles invited Lenny POPKIN to perform on his second CD, "CONTRAPUNTIC JAZZ BAND" ACT 2" (Space time records), which was hailed by the critics. He composed an Octet for Clarinet, Bassoon and French Horn, and a string Quintet with music inspired by the «*Epic of Gilgamesh*» which he will perform in June, 2015.

Recently, he met saxophonist Luigi GRASSO, born in 1986, with whom he has recorded in trio and sextet, and Champian FULTON, also born in 1986. Gilles is happy to be performing the music he loves.

