

Ted Rosenthal Biography – long version

Ted Rosenthal is one of the leading jazz pianist/composers of his generation. The New Yorker magazine describes him as *“a musician’s musician who balances technique and taste.”* The Los Angeles Times calls him *“a pianist of rarest skill.”* Rosenthal actively tours worldwide with his trio and as a soloist. He also has performed with many jazz greats, including Gerry Mulligan, Art Farmer, Phil Woods, Bob Brookmeyer, and James Moody.

Winner of the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Piano Competition, Rosenthal has released nineteen CDs as a leader, including a series of 4 new CDs in 2025, featuring his distinctive arrangements of the Great American Songbook, reimaginings of classical themes and original compositions. **Rhapsody in Gershwin**, which features his arrangement of Rhapsody in Blue for jazz trio, reached #1 in jazz album sales at iTunes and Amazon and received rave reviews: *“A musical tour de force”* - Audiophile Magazine. **Wonderland**, was selected as a New York Times holiday pick, and received much critical praise: *“Sleek, chic and elegant”* – Howard Reich, Chicago Tribune. **Out of this World**, which reached number-one on the Jazz Radio Charts, features the Rosenthal Trio’s personal takes on standards from the Great American Songbook.

Rosenthal’s CD **Impromptu**, showcases his reimaginings of classical themes for jazz trio. *New York Times* critic Nate Chinen noted Rosenthal’s *“acute intellect and limpid touch.”* And Elliott Simon of AllAboutJazz said, *“A serious listen to Impromptu will be a mind-changing experience...sit back and enjoy these wonderfully creative takes on ten compositions from the classical canon that have never sounded so cool.”* Rosenthal’s solo album, **The 3 B's**, received 4 stars from DownBeat magazine. It features renditions of the music of Bud Powell, Bill Evans and his improvisations on Beethoven themes. *“In Rosenthal's hands all this music sounds as though it sprang from the same muse, and that's the sign of a skilled, imaginative artist.”* - David R. Adler, All Music Guide.

A recipient of three grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Rosenthal regularly performs and records his compositions, which include jazz tunes and large-scale works. Rosenthal’s jazz opera, “Dear Erich,” was commissioned and premiered by New York City Opera in 2019. “Dear Erich” attracted much press and critical acclaim: *“Compelling...tells a true, wrenching story. Rosenthal's score conveys regret and fragility, with scenes that invite real breakout jazz”* – A. Tomassini, New York Times. *“Leaves the listener ready to explode with applause”* - D. Salazar, Opera Wire. Since the premiere, Rosenthal has presented more than a dozen concert performances of “Dear Erich,” both in the US and Europe.

Rosenthal has also been commissioned by Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, The Park Avenue Chamber Symphony, and Dallas Black Dance Theatre. “The Survivor,” his concerto for piano and orchestra, has been performed by the Manhattan Jazz Philharmonic and the Rockland Symphony Orchestra, with Rosenthal at the piano. Rosenthal premiered his second jazz piano concerto, “Jazz Fantasy,” with The Park Avenue Chamber Symphony.

Rosenthal was artistic director of Jazz at the Riverdale Y and Jazz at Dicapo Theatre, both in New York City. He has also performed with Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, and Jon Faddis and the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band. In addition, Rosenthal has been the pianist of choice for many top jazz vocalists including Helen Merrill, Ann Hampton Callaway, Kurt Elling and Barbara Cook. He appeared on Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz on National Public Radio and performed with David Sanborn on NBC's Night Music.

Rosenthal's orchestral performances include solo and featured appearances with The Detroit Symphony, The Phoenix Symphony The Boston Pops, The Grand Rapids Symphony, The Rochester Philharmonic, The Pittsburgh Symphony and The Fort Worth Symphony. Rosenthal often adds improvisations to his performances of Gershwin's works for piano and orchestra, adding an extra dimension of vitality and spontaneity to the music. Rosenthal performed Gershwin's Concerto in F and Rhapsody in Blue for the opening concert of the 92nd Street Y's 2015-16 season. The New York Times called his playing *"notable both for its flair and languid, sultry expressive gestures."* In 2014 Rosenthal performed Rhapsody in Blue at Town Hall in a concert celebrating the 90th anniversary of its premiere and gave many performances of Rhapsody in 2024 celebrating the 100th anniversary.

Rosenthal received his Bachelors and Masters degrees from the Manhattan School of Music. Active in jazz education, he is on the faculties of The Juilliard School, and Manhattan School of Music, where he also served on their Board of Trustees and received the Presidential Medal for Distinguished Faculty Service. Rosenthal has taught and mentored many of the leading jazz pianists of the younger generation. Rosenthal also presents jazz clinics throughout the world, often in conjunction with his touring. He was a contributing editor for Piano and Keyboard magazine and has published piano arrangements and feature articles for Piano Today, The Piano Stylist and The Juilliard Journal.

Born and raised in Great Neck, Long Island, Rosenthal began playing by ear at a young age, and started studying at age 12 with the well-known pianist Tony Aless. He began to immerse himself in the craft of composition and arrangement during two high school summers at the Eastman Summer Arranging Institute, and later at the BMI Jazz Composers Workshop with Bob Brookmeyer and Manny Albam. "Some of my most important influences were pianists who had an historical and wide-ranging approach," says Rosenthal, particularly emphasizing that lessons during high school years with stride-to-avant maestro Jaki Byard influenced his inclusive penchant for embracing the language and aesthetic principles of jazz piano tradition while restating it in his own manner. Rosenthal also studied briefly with Lennie Tristano and attended workshops with Billy Taylor, Woody Shaw and others.

While earning his degrees in classical piano performance at Manhattan School of Music, he continued to pursue his love of jazz outside the classroom. Over the ensuing decade, he would continue classical piano studies with Phillip Kewin while developing repertoire and jazz stylings at numerous jazz clubs and piano bars around New York (including a six-year trio run at the

Grand Hyatt Hotel) and on freelance jobs with Phil Woods, Ron Carter, Mel Lewis, Clark Terry, Grady Tate and Lionel Hampton.

After his first-place finish in the 1988 Thelonious Monk Piano Competition, Rosenthal launched his career as a solo artist. His first CD as a leader, **New Tunes, New Traditions**, with top-shelf personnel Ron Carter, Billy Higgins and Tom Harrell, interweaves music of Thelonious Monk with his own original compositions. On his third CD, **Images Of Monk**, Rosenthal presented a suite of earthy-yet-heady arrangements of Monk pieces by an all-star sextet. *“Surely Monk would have dug this playfulness more than the literalism of his imitators,”* Robert Doerschuk wrote in Keyboard Magazine.

Under contract to Concord Records during the ‘90s, Rosenthal also recorded a critically acclaimed solo piano CD as part of the label’s **Maybeck Recital Hall** series. *“One of the best (Maybecks) I’ve heard,”* Richard Palmer wrote in Jazz Journal. *“A pianist of rare insight and personality. I am particularly taken with his lovingly historical grasp of jazz piano’s panoply.”*

Rosenthal joined Gerry Mulligan’s Tentet in 1992 and toured in his quartet until Mulligan’s death in 1996, recording three CDs and performing in major jazz festivals throughout the world. Jazz journalist Gene Lees wrote: *“The rapport of the (Mulligan) group was amazing, particularly Gerry’s telepathic communication with outstanding pianist Ted Rosenthal... The byplay with Rosenthal left me with my jaw hanging down.”* After Mulligan’s death, Rosenthal became musical director of The Gerry Mulligan All Star Tribute Band, featuring Lee Konitz, Bob Brookmeyer and Randy Brecker. The group’s CD, **Thank You, Gerry!**, was nominated for a Grammy award in 1998. Rosenthal continued his association with Bob Brookmeyer and recorded a duo album with him, **One Night in Vermont**. *“A stunning album complete with all of jazz’ beloved nuances.”* – Celeste Sunderland, All About Jazz.

Rosenthal’s other sideman credits include stints with trumpeters Art Farmer and Jon Faddis, tours and recording dates with trumpeter Randy Sandke and clarinetist-tenor saxophonist Ken Peplowski. He regularly performs in jazz piano concerts, including different editions of the summer festival presented by New York’s 92nd Street Y. At the 2003 JVC Jazz Festival, Rosenthal co-produced with George Wein and performed in *Piano Starts Here*, also featuring Kenny Barron, Cedar Walton and others. Ted Rosenthal is a Steinway artist.

Rosenthal is married to Lesley Rosenthal, Chief Operating Officer of The Juilliard School. His website is www.tedrosenthal.com