

Larry Coryell

Larry Coryell has been described by Whitney Balliett as “the most innovative and original guitarist since **Charlie Christian**.” Beginning with his first recordings with **Chico Hamilton** and his tenure with the **Gary Burton Quartet**, Larry has remained in the pantheon of great jazz guitarists for more than thirty years. His personal philosophy of music has kept his playing fresh and exciting and makes each of his personal appearances or recordings a special event.

Born in Galveston, Texas, Larry tried his hand at a number of instruments before settling on guitar. He cites **Chet Atkins**, **Chuck Berry** and later, **Wes Montgomery**, **Barney Kessell** and **Joe Pass** as influences during his early formative years.

Arriving in New York via Seattle in the mid 1960's, Larry realized that a smooth and formidable instrumental technique was a prerequisite for musical expression. To master every aspect of his chosen instrument, Larry studied classical guitar with **Leonid Bolotine** while keeping his eyes on the bustling New York jazz scene. After developing his virtuoso technique, Larry felt ready to make his move into jazz and played his first job with “**Killer**” **Joe Piro** and soon thereafter, made his first recording with **Chico Hamilton** and an early fusion band called The Free Spirits. National recognition came to Larry during his tenure with the **Gary Burton Quartet** in 1967.

The late 60's and early 70's saw Larry as one of the most in-demand guitarists, not only in jazz but in all musical genres. It was during this time that Larry released a series of critically acclaimed albums for Vanguard, did some rock experimentation with **Steve Marcus**, toured with British musicians **Jack Bruce** and **Mitch Mitchell** and appeared on the first album by the Jazz Composer's Orchestra Association. There were sessions with **Jimmy Webb**, **The Fifth Dimension**, **Charles Mingus**, **Billy Cobham**, **Chick Corea**, **John McLaughlin** and **Miroslav Vitous**. The albums produced at this time show **Larry Coryell** to be a profound musical prophet, merging jazz, rock, free-form improvisations and Eastern modes and scales in a way that was new at the time and still communicates power and emotion years later.

In 1974, Larry formed **The 11th House**, one of the most popular and successful fusion bands of its time. The band, comprising Coryell, **Randy Brecker**, **Alphonse Mouzon**, **Mike Mandel** and **Danny Trifan**, demolished the barriers between jazz and rock and came up with a sound that merged the best elements of both – the raw emotional power of rock with the more structured ideas of jazz.

After **The 11th House** disbanded, Larry made a series of solo albums, two albums of duets with respectively **Steve Kahn** and **Philip Catherine**, and a direct-to-disc recording with the **Brubeck Brothers**. Throughout this diverse career, Larry has put himself totally at the service of his music. “I am destined to be the eternal student, to continue developing my flow of ideas with my ability to flow with them...to listen to everything...”

Currently with High Note Records, Larry has produced “Monk, Trane, Miles & Me” as well as “The Power Trio” – recorded live at Jazz Showcase in Chicago with **Paul Wertico** and **Larry Gray**. Larry's newly formed trio consisting of **Paul Wertico** and **Mark Egan** recorded their most recent collaboration, “Tricycles” at Klangstudio Leyh in Sandhausen, Germany in the spring of 2003. The album is distributed by In+Out Records in Germany. All of Larry's work, both singly and collectively, highlights Larry's uncanny ability to revisit jazz standards and imbue them with the new life and ideas. He brings to them his years of experience in playing, listening and learning and synthesizes them into something greater than the sum of their parts.

In a wonderful little book on Zen and, of all things, archery, the point is made that the shooter becomes the arrow. As a result of his effort to be the “eternal student,” **Larry Coryell** is also the “eternal teacher,” teaching us musical expression is ever-evolving and changing. With his kaleidoscopic imagination and flawless technique, **Larry Coryell** is perhaps the best suited of today's artist to bring jazz guitar into the new millennium.