John Clayton

"He's nothing short of amazing. Between composing, arranging, and conducting, as well as being a superb bass player in both the jazz and symphonic idioms, who knows where his talent ends? John Clayton can go just about anywhere from here."
- Johnny Mandel

Double bassist John Clayton has gained prominence as performer, composer, and arranger in both the jazz and classical fields. Leonard Feather of the L.A. Times has proclaimed him "a phenomenon" whose "intonation, musicianship and wealth of ideas reflect his broad experience."

After studying bass under the esteemed Ray Brown, John was bassist for the television series "The Mancini Generation" following which he toured and recorded across the world with jazz pianist Monty Alexander. He then began a two year association with Count Basie and his orchestra as a player, while developing his compositional and arranging skills.

John relocated to Los Angeles in 1984 following five years as principal bassist with the Amsterdam Philharmonic Orchestra. He currently conducts, composes, and co-leads the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, receiving a 1991 Grammy nomination for his composition "Brush This" from "Groove Shop" (Capri), their debut recording. Enthusiastic popular and critical acclaim for "Heart and Soul" (Capri), the Orchestra's second release, continues to enhance John's sterling reputation as multi-faceted jazzman extraordanaire.

1991 also was the year that John's stirring arrangement of "The Star Spangled Banner" for Whitney Houston resulted in the fastest selling single in the history of Arista Records.

In addition to establishing himself as a studio session player, performing with various small jazz groups, and conducting and arranging for notable performers such as Carmen McRae, Nancy Wilson, Joe Williams, Ernestine Anderson, and the Tonight Show Band, John also teaches at USC and has been music director for several jazz festivals. Recently he highlighted his classical skills by composing for the Northwest Chamber Orchestra and conducting his own and other classical jazz works with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra.

The esteem in which his peers hold this multi-talented artist is evidenced by his recent election as president of the 1.500 member International Bassist Association. As Leonard Feather attests while recognizing John as "one of the six best possibilities to assume the mantle of Miles Davis," John Clayton Jr. is "rapidly becoming one of the most internationally respected bassists and composers, with good reason."