

## RON ESCHETE BIO

**Ron Escheté** (*pronounced ESH-tay*) is the consummate master of the seven-string guitar. Whether he is playing bebop, ballads or blues he is a musically sophisticated guitarist who plays with grace and dignity. "Escheté is one of the finest jazz guitarists in L.A. – no small achievement in a region dense with superb players," says Jim Ferguson of *JazzTimes*. His deft and nimble fingers paint a spectrum of sound so rich that his voicings are often compared with those of a pianist. *20th Century Guitar* likens his sound to that of the great Bill Evans.

Escheté is currently performing and recording with the Ron Escheté Trio, featuring Todd Johnson on six-string bass and Kendall Kay on drums. While he has long been regarded as one of the finest guitarists in mainstream jazz, now Escheté ranks as an innovative leader for his work with this ensemble. "The Escheté trio is as polished as the classic Modern Jazz Quartet... This is a unit that speaks with a single voice. It is a voice of brilliant musical reason." – Jim Merod, *Jazz News*. What is most unique about the sound of this trio is the depth and texture created by the coupling of Escheté's seven strings with Johnson's six strings. The outcome – "a rich tapestry of melody, harmony and teamwork," says Hal Howland for *Modern Drummer Magazine*.

Escheté was born in 1948 in Houma, Louisiana, and not surprisingly his early influences were jazz masters Jim Hall, Howard Roberts and Wes Montgomery. After receiving his first guitar at the age of 14, Escheté joined a quartet and was working clubs in Louisiana before he had even graduated from high school. He attended Loyola University where he majored in classical guitar and minored in flute. While there he studied with classical guitarist Paul Guma.

Shortly after Escheté left Loyola he was tapped to tour with Buddy Greco. While on tour with Greco, Escheté set his sites on the Los Angeles music scene. In 1970 Escheté relocated to California, working and recording with vibist Dave Pike. Then in 1975 he joined forces with pianist Gene Harris and quickly establish his reputation as a premier accompanist. Over the decades Escheté has worked with the greatest artists in jazz including: Ella Fitzgerald; Sarah Vaughn; Diana Krall; Dizzy Gillespie; Milt Jackson; Ray Brown and many more.

Escheté has appeared on the Tonight Show with Diana Krall, the Merv Griffin Show with the Mort Lindsey Orchestra, the Mike Douglas Show with Buddy Greco. He has played nearly every notable jazz venue in the southern California including the Catalina Bar and Grill, The Jazz Bakery, Steamers, Donte's, Carmelo's, The Parisian Room and The Lighthouse to name only a few. He has toured extensively and has played major venues from New York to San Francisco.

Escheté cites a 1988 gig in San Diego as a critical turning point in his career. There he began to shed his reputation as the quintessential sideman; he stepped to the center of the stage and he began exploring original material. "Long considered to be one of the finest guitarists in mainstream jazz by musicians and listeners alike, he has now taken over the reins, and 'innovative leader' might be a better appellation," says preeminent jazz critic, Zan Stewart. In 1994 he released his first solo recording for Concord entitled, *A Closer Look*, showcasing his masterful fingerstyle sound and his seven-string Benedetto arch-top. In addition to this solo recording Escheté has recorded four CDs with his trio (*Softwinds*, *Rain Or Shine*, *Mo' Strings Attached* and *Live At Rocco*). *In The Middle*, their fifth CD, was released in 2006 and is the first to feature the current line-up of Ron, Todd and Kendall.

While his career has been primarily focused on performance, this master musician has dedicated nearly twenty five years to teaching music at many colleges and universities, including among others: North Texas State University, Utah State University, Loyola University, Louisiana State University at New Orleans, California State Universities at Long Beach and Fullerton, and Musician's Institute in Hollywood. He has authored three books: *Melodic Chord Phrases* (R.E.H Publications), *The Jazz Guitar Soloist* (Alfred Publications), and a book of Howard Roberts solos entitled *Super Solos* (Payback Publications).

Ron Escheté has been described as a masterful musical chameleon, switching melodic lines and ideas with cool efficiency and beauty. He transforms from accompanist to soloist to band-leader; from musical master to musical mentor.

"Escheté is one of the best there is at playing the "traditional" melodic jazz guitar style; a keeper of the flame."  
– Adrian Ingram, *Just Jazz Guitar*