Medium Bio

Internationally renowned bassist and Mack Avenue recording artist, Rodney Whitaker is one of the world’s renowned double bass performers, educators, mentors and is dedicated to inspiring and growing the next generation of jazz educators and musicians.  A Detroit native, he grew up in the city soaking in the sounds of jazz and classical music and working with the finest musicians in the city.  Building on his Detroit roots and enormous talent, Whitaker went on to earn an international reputation as one of the world’s finest jazz double bass performers. He completed a seven-year tenure as bassist with the Wynton Marsalis’ Sextet, the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and has toured the world over the last twenty-six years, collaborating with over 100+ legendary performing jazz artists such as Dianne Reeves, Hank Jones, Mulgrew Miller, Junko Onishi, Yutaka Shiina, Kenny Burrell, Diana Krall, John Lewis, Kathleen Battle, Marian McPartland, Wycliffe Gordon, Kenny Garrett, Bradford Marsalis, Bob James, Roy Hargrove, Jon Carl Hendricks, Tommy Flanagan, Frank Morgan, Terence Blanchard, Betty “Be-Bop” Carter, Chick Corea, and leading symphony orchestras across the world—just to name a few. In addition, he has appeared and presented master classes at the International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE) conferences.  Featured on more than 100+ recordings - from film to compact discs - Whitaker’s film scores, China, directed by Jeff Wray, was released on PBS Fall 2002 and Malaria and Malawi, released on PBS Fall 2010.  Also, Whitaker has a DVD release featuring Michigan State University’s Jazz Department entitled, “Inside Jazz” and three new compact discs entitled, “Get Ready” & “Work To Do”—both on Mack Avenue Records and “Better Than Alright” by Michigan State University College of Music. In 2011, he was nominated for an EMMY for the ‘Original Music’ category, “Malawi and Malaria: Fighting to Save the Children” produced by Robert Gould and Sue Carter.  Whitaker collaborated with musicians Phil Dwyer and Alan Jones on “Let Me Tell You About My Day,” produced by Alma Records and was nominated for a Juno Award in 2006 for Traditional Jazz Album of the Year, Canada's equivalent to the United State of America’s Grammy.  He is a full professor of jazz double bass and director of jazz studies at Michigan State University where he has built one of the leading jazz degree granting programs offering both a bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Jazz Performance.