Robert Buonaspina

Short-Form Biography

Robert T. Buonaspina is a New-York-City-based composer, arranger, producer/music director, conductor/bandleader, multi-instrumentalist, and educator. In 2020, Robert received his Master's degree in Jazz Composition from Manhattan School of Music, where he was a student of Jim McNeely and Phil Markowitz. Since 2021, Robert has taught jazz scoring and orchestration on the adjunct faculty of Hofstra University, and in Fall 2026 he also serves as a Substitute Lecturer at Baruch College (CUNY). Since January 2023, Robert has been Director of Music at the Fourth Universalist Society in New York City and, since 2025, pianist at Temple Am Echad in Lynbrook.

As a composer and arranger, Robert has had the honor of having his work performed around the world: by ensembles ranging from the JazzKombinat jazz orchestra in Hamburg, Germany — all the way to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the Empire State Building for New York Fashion Week, and the Kennedy Center. In January 2021, Robert was the recipient of the International Society of Jazz Arrangers and Composers (ISJAC) Chuck Owen Prize in Jazz Composition, where his work for jazz ensemble, "Smile Pretty," was performed and professionally recorded by the WDR Big Band in Cologne, Germany. More recently, his writing has reached Birdland and the Grammy-winning Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra. Robert has collaborated with heavy hitters across the scene: including Grammy-winning producer Larry Klein, Chico Pinheiro, Renée Fleming, the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Candice Hoyes, Joel Ross, Veronica Swift, DePue Brothers Band, the RWS Entertainment Group, and Steven Feifke, on whose album That Same River (4.5 stars, DownBeat) he served as producer.

Also an avid pianist and violist, Robert has shared the stage with key jazz, musical theatre, and pop figures like Lalah Hathaway, Vince Mendoza, Nick Tangorra, Ralph Lalama, John McDaniel, Melissa Errico, Alice Ripley, and the Steven Feifke Big Band. Since 2023, he has played viola in Rafael Piccolotto de Lima's Forró Sem Palavras, and his devotion to the music of Northeast Brazil has taken him to Brazil six times. Whether on piano or on viola, Robert has performed at seminal venues throughout New York such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Dizzy's Club, Feinstein's/54 Below, The Django (at the Roxy Hotel), and the Riverside Church.