

Herlin Riley is a native of New Orleans. He's a member of a New Orleans musical family (The Lastie Family). Today he's considered to be one of the most premier and prolific drummers in the world today. The range of his musical experiences makes the demand for his drumming skills a first call for performers, recording artist and teaching engagements. Herlin started on the drums when he was three. He played trumpet through high school but went back to drums after college. Soon afterwards he began getting more calls to play drums than trumpet. In the early 80's Herlin switched to playing the drums exclusively and was called to London, Australia and Europe to play in a 1920's style musical called "One Mo Time". Immediately following, he got the call to play with trumpeter Al Hirt. After leaving Hirt's band he spent 5 years with jazz pianist Ahmad Jamal. In 1988 Herlin was invited to play with the Wynton Marsalis Quintet, which augmented to a septet and later became The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. As a member of The LCJO, Riley played a large roll in developing the drum parts for Wynton Marsalis's Pulitzer Prize-winning recording "Blood On The Fields". Herlin has also played and/or recorded with Harry Connick Jr. ,Jon Batiste, George Benson, Dr Lonnie Smith, Dianne Reeves, Cassandra Wilson, Ruth Brown, Dr John, Cubanismo, McCoy Tyner, John Clayton, Dee Daniels, Ambrose Akinmusire, Junko Onishi, Yutaka Shiina, Rufus Reid, Ellis Marsalis, Steve Turre, Terence Blanchard, Nicolas Payton, Ellis Marsalis, Branford Marsalis, Delfeayo Marsalis, Victor Goines, Clifford Lamb and many more. Riley has collaborated with two other New Orleans drummers (Shannon Powell and Jason Marsalis) to form a group called The New Orleans Groove Masters. In 2020 The Groove Master recorded a single entitled "Get Back" during the Covid 19 pandemic. Herlin Riley is also an educator and lecturer in jazz drumming and percussion. Herlin was an adjunct professor at the Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University in Chicago, The Juilliard School of Music in New York and The University of New Orleans jazz studies program. He has four recordings as a leader "Watch What You're Doing" & "Cream Of The Crescent" on the Criss Cross Jazz label and "New Direction" & Perpetual Optimism" on the Mack Avenue label. Herlin Riley is the featured artist in the book and video titled "New Orleans Jazz and Second Line Drumming. In addition he wrote the forward to the book " Drumsville The Evolution Of The New Orleans Beat", written by Robert H. Cataliotti.