

Mike Gurrola has claimed his place as one of the most sought-after and well-regarded bassists on the west coast, performing most regularly with pianist, composer, recording artist, and band leader Eric Reed. He is known in the upper echelons of the jazz community for his strong feel, pure tone, and selfless allegiance to the music and the moment. Mike set himself on this course as a student at the L.A. County High School for the Arts. Through records his dad gave him and his first bass teacher Zac Matthews, Mike became enamored with the bass's role, especially in jazz—unwavering yet explorative, improvised yet dependable—as exemplified by Paul Chambers, Christian McBride, and especially Ray Brown. He quickly grew hungry for challenges outside of school and began showing up in every corner of L.A.'s sprawling jazz scene, making the jam session rounds at The Spot, The Mint, and Steamers, where he got his first chances to play with stalwarts of the L.A. jazz community.

During his senior year, Kenny Dennis of the LACHSA jazz faculty arranged a scholarship for Mike to study privately with renowned bassist, educator, and former Brown student John Clayton. The scholarship was in Ray Brown's name, funded by the Arts High Foundation, and presented to Mike by Brown's widow Cecilia. John Clayton is known for uncompromising standards - challenging his students with high expectations and encouraging them with equally high hopes. "He'd give me an impossible amount of work to do with a big smile on his face," Mike recalls. Clayton instilled a dual principle: Dream as big as possible and work as hard as possible. Mike maintains a close relationship with Clayton to this day, leaning on his wisdom to navigate music (and the music business) and continually refine his craft.

By his late teens, Mike was already gigging around L.A. with the likes of Kevin Kanner, Josh Nelson, Nick Mancini, and Melissa Morgan. He formed

an especially close rapport with Kanner, whose fiery drumming and hard bop enthusiasm always reminded Mike to bring his best every time he played. Mike also began playing with guitarist Graham Dechter, whose quartet includes Jeff Hamilton on drums. Hamilton has since become another mentor to Mike, offering not only advice but many professional opportunities as well. Playing with Hamilton is especially meaningful for Mike, since two of the bassists that have done it most are his mentor Clayton and his idol Brown. When not in one of his regular roles, he has been in high demand with some of the finest in jazz, including Benny Green, Ralph Moore, Harold Mabern, Roy McCurdy, Willie Jones III, Pharoah Sanders, and Benny Golson. At age 28, Mike's career is off to a busy and fulfilling start with much more to come.