

# Wytold Bio

Wytold plays an electric cello with two extra strings allowing him to capture the depth and power of a stand-up bass, the rich tonal timbre of the acoustic cello, and the bright crispness of violin solos and harmonies. He records his live playing on stage using a foot pedal and laptop to create his own rock-orchestral



arrangements that have been featured in film, theater, dance, and with the National Symphony Orchestra. Growing up in northern Virginia with interweaving passions for youth orchestra, powerful guitar solos, Bach cello suites, and popular radio songs from the '90s and 2000s, Wytold's original music celebrates classical technique hand-in-hand with modern grooves, improv, and rhythms of pop, rock, jazz, and world styles. Using electronic edge alongside acoustic harmonies and double-stop grit, Wytold's electrified-chamber sound energizes rock clubs as much as it inspires reflective audiences in the concert hall.

Wytold is a DC-based composer and cellist who has performed his original compositions with the National Symphony Orchestra several years in a row in collaboration with GRAMMY-nominated progressive hip-hop artist Christylez Bacon. Wytold's music is featured in the Sundance award-winning and EMMY-nominated film, *Blood Brother*, the recently released award-winning documentary, *New Chefs on the Block*, and the critically acclaimed Woolly Mammoth Theater production of "An Octoroon". His newly released album, *Fireflies, Fairies & Squids* ranked in the Top Ten RMR World Music Radio Chart for 13 weeks in a row, with "Giant Squids" at #1 for 6 weeks. Wytold is also an active composer for the contemporary dance company, Christopher K Morgan & Artists (CKM&A). Wytold was in

residence with CKM&A at the Maui Cultural Center in Hawaii to create Pohaku, a piece that explores historical and current interactions between western and native Hawaiian cultures. He has toured nationally with CKM&A in Hawaii, California, New York, and Minnesota.

Wytold has regularly performed for 5 years at Walter Reed Military Hospital and co-leads workshops that help Veterans and family members heal through creating music at USOs located at Walter Reed and Fort Belvoir. He is a board member of the newly established non-profit organization, Community Building Art Works (CBAW), which creates broader dialogue about Veterans and other social issues through art, music, and writing. In January 2017, he was joined by Metropolitan Opera violinist Patmore Lewis to perform Wytold's live musical score for "We Are Not Done Yet", an evening of Veteran group poetry about war and PTSD directed and produced by EMMY-nominated actor Jeffrey Wright at the Shakespeare Lansburgh Theater. Wytold also leads educational workshops for elementary, middle and high schools through Artivate and for college students through Degy Entertainment. He gave a TEDx performance discussing the relationship between his six-string electric cello compositions and classical and popular music. In 2015, he gave a sold-out performance titled "Biggie, Beethoven, Busta, and Bach" which blended classically-inspired instrumental covers of popular rap songs with remixes of well-known classical themes.

Wytold is an NS Design featured artist, recent Strathmore Artist in Residence, and a recipient of several grant awards from the Maryland State Arts Council, the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County. Wytold was also selected to study and collaborate with Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble in their 2015 Global Musician Workshop, and the Wytold Ensemble was selected as one of the top 5 finalists in the 21st Century Musician Emerging Artist Ensemble Competition.

Other recent performances include: Sundance Film Festival, the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the French Embassy, the Maui Arts & Cultural Center, the Ordway Theater in St. Paul, ODC Theater in San Francisco, the National Geographic Museum, the Strathmore Performing Arts Center, the Levine School of Music, the Phillips Collection, Sydney-Harman Hall, the DC Jazz Festival, the Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts, the Atlas Performing Arts Center, and the National Cherry Blossom Festival, among many other venues.

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Wytold (William Wytold Lebing) began private lessons in classical cello repertoire at age 10 and participated in school and regional youth orchestras throughout Northern Virginia, often as principal chair. Wytold always dreamt of going to college to study cello performance but was held back by carpal tunnel syndrome, caused by an over-zealous and technically unsound approach to the instrument. After a 1.5 year hiatus, Wytold reintroduced himself to playing music by learning folk songs on the acoustic guitar. Guitar strumming and finger-picking gradually reintroduced Wytold's fingers and wrists to the motions involved in performing and also instilled a new soul and passion for heart-felt musicianship and the musical experience.

Shortly thereafter, Wytold translated to the cello the techniques he learned on guitar, such as strumming chord progressions, finger-picking, playing improvised solos, and writing songs that incorporate contemporary grooves with a verse-chorus format. Just before receiving two Master's Degrees from Pitt and moving to DC (one in Philosophy, one in History and Philosophy of Science), Wytold taught himself to play the shoulder-strapped six-string electric cello with live-looping. His mathematical studies helped him visualize and manipulate his different cello layers when composing and performing, often inspired by outdoor rock climbing and hiking trips in West Virginia and California. Energized by DC's cultural and

musical diversity, Wytold quickly became immersed in many different non-classical collaborations that in turn influence his own playing and compositions, including classical Hindustani, middle eastern percussion, hip-hop, go-go, folk, indie rock, americana, and jazz. Through performance, composition, and education, Wytold continues to learn from and synthesize these various influences while encouraging budding strings musicians to explore non-traditional musical styles and techniques.