

NATHAN EAST

Born one of the seven children of Thomas and Gwendolyn East on December 8, 1955, in Philadelphia, PA, Nathan East and his family moved to San Diego, CA, when he was four years old to accommodate his father's aerodynamic



engineering job. As a child, East would peck out familiar melodies on the family piano. He began playing the cello in the junior high school orchestra when he was in the seventh grade. When East was 14, he switched to bass guitar, inspired by his older brother David's mastery of the instrument. He began playing for local church groups and folk masses with his brothers. East played along with

the recordings of jazz bassists Ron Carter, Ray Brown, Charles Mingus, Buster Williams, Scott LaFargo, Motown's James Jamerson, James Brown, Sly Stone with Larry Graham, Cream, and horn bands like Chicago, Tower of Power, and Blood, Sweat & Tears as they came over the radio or out of his record player. The young bassist began playing in his high school's jazz ensemble, marching band, choir, chorus, and pep band, as well as Top 40 bands. He also listened to Wes Montgomery, Quincy Jones, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Cannonball Adderley, George Benson, Bob James, Harvey Mason, Lee Ritenour, Jimi Hendrix, Santana, session bassist Chuck Rainey, Earth, Wind & Fire's Verdine White, and Rocco Prestia. East's breakthrough came while he was a member of a band named Power. They were hired as the road band for a Stax revue. The recognition brought the attention of Barry White, who hired the band for a national tour. Still a teenager, East became a member of the Love Unlimited Orchestra ("Love's Theme") playing Madison Square Garden, the Apollo Theater, and other major venues. East earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music from University of California at San Diego. He was starting to work on a master's degree when instructor Bertram Turetzky suggested that he already had enough education and that it was time for him to go to Los Angeles to try and start a lucrative music career. While getting involved with the San Diego club and studio scene, Barry White contacted him to play on some of his recording projects. In early 1980, veteran writer/arranger Gene Page, whom East had worked with on White's sessions, called the bassist to play on a recording session for a commercial jingle. Impressed with East's ability to read music as well as his diverse playing skills, Page used East on numerous projects (Dionne Warwick, Johnny Mathis). As East's reputation grew on the L.A. session scene, so did his job calls. From that point on, East worked consistently. He did sessions for Lionel Richie ("Endless Love," Kenny Rogers' "Lady") and Kenny Loggins ("Vox

Humana," "Footloose"). He toured with Loggins (appearing with the singer on a late-'90s *Live By Request* installment on the A&E network) and with keyboardist Greg Phillinganes and drummer Steve Ferrone as part of Eric Clapton's late-'80s band. In 1990, while recording Bob James' *Grand Piano Canyon* album, the keyboardist asked East, Lee Ritenour, and Harvey Mason if they'd be interested in forming a group where each member would be an equal partner and could contribute songs. James, who worked for Warner Bros.' jazz A&R department, got them a deal with the label; a couple of months later, the group now known as Fourplay began recording their debut album. Their first record, 1991's *Fourplay*, sold half a million copies and it remained at number one on Billboard's contemporary jazz charts for 33 weeks. Their next LP, 1993's *Between the Sheets*, reached number one, went gold, and received a Grammy nomination. In 1995, their third gold album, *Elixir*, inherited the number one position from Kenny G's *Breathless* and held on to the top spot for a record 92 weeks. Fourplay's 4 album entered the jazz charts at number one. East's two younger brothers are musicians. James East is the bassist with Sergio Mendes and Marcel East is a guitarist/songwriter/producer working with Nathan on a group called Two Faces of East. His oldest brother Raymond is Pastor/Monsignor of Church of the Nativity in Washington, D.C., and an excellent vocalist. The musician won the most valuable player award in the bass category at the International Rock Awards. East developed his own Yamaha Signature Series bass guitar that is available in musical instrument stores. He also has an instructional VHS video, *Contemporary Electric Bass*.