

R. Carlos Nakai Bio

Of Navajo-Ute heritage, R. Carlos Nakai is the world's premier performer of the Native American flute. As an artist, he is an adventurer and risk taker, always giving his musical imagination free rein. Nakai, while cognizant of the traditional use of the flute as a solo instrument, began finding new settings for it, especially in the genres of jazz and classical. He founded the ethnic jazz ensemble, the R. Carlos Nakai Quartet, to explore the intersection of ethnic and jazz idioms. Nakai is also an iconoclastic traditionalist who views his cultural heritage not only as a source and inspiration, but also a dynamic continuum of natural change, growth, and adaptation subject to the artist's expressive needs.

Nakai's first album, *Changes* was released by Canyon Records in 1983, and since then he has released forty albums with Canyon plus additional albums and guest appearances on multiple labels. In addition to his educational workshops and residencies, Nakai has appeared as a soloist throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan, and has worked with guitarist/luthier William Eaton, composer James DeMars, pianist Peter Kater and "the late" Paul Horn among many others. The famed American choreographer Martha Graham used Nakai's second album, *Cycles*, in her last work *Night Chant*.

Nakai has received numerous Grammy® nominations and has received two gold records (500,000 units sold) for *Canyon Trilogy* and *Earth Spirit* which are the first (and only) Native American recordings to earn this recognition. In 2014, *Canyon Trilogy* reached Platinum (over 1 million units sold), the first ever for a Native American artist performing traditional solo flute music. He has sold over four million albums in the course of his career.