

JAMES MCBRIDE
WRITER / COMPOSER / MUSICIAN

James McBride is a true Renaissance man. An award-winning writer, composer, and saxophonist, his landmark memoir, *The Color of Water*, is an American classic read in colleges and high schools across America. A *New York Times* bestseller for two years, the book is a moving account of his mother, a white Jewish woman from Poland who raised 12 black children in New York City and sent each to college. It has been translated into more than 17 languages, sold more than 2.1 million copies worldwide, and is a perennial favorite of book clubs and “One Book, One Community” events in areas including New York and Philadelphia.

His second book, *Miracle at St. Anna*, the story of a black American soldier who befriends an Italian boy during World War II, was dubbed a “searingly, soaringly beautiful novel” by *The Baltimore Sun*. The book became a major motion picture through Touchstone/Disney, directed by acclaimed filmmaker Spike Lee. McBride’s latest effort is *Song Yet Sung*, a national bestseller about slaves and slave catchers on Maryland’s eastern shore. The book is the 2009 choice of the Maryland Humanities Council “One Book/One Maryland.”

A former staff writer for *The Boston Globe*, *People*, and *The Washington Post*, McBride’s work has appeared in numerous publications, including *The New York Times* and *Rolling Stone*. He covered Michael Jackson exclusively for *People* during Jackson’s 1984 Victory Tour, at the height of Jackson’s popularity. McBride is the recipient of the 1997 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award as well as several awards for his work as a composer in musical theatre, including the American Arts and Letters Richard Rodgers Award, The ASCAP Richard Rodgers Horizons Award and the American Music Theatre Festival’s Stephen Sondheim Award. He has written songs for Anita Baker, Grover Washington, Jr., Gary Burton, Silver Burdett Music Textbooks, and for the PBS television character “Barney.”

McBride studied composition at The Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio. He holds a Master’s degree in journalism from Columbia University and several honorary doctorates. Currently a Distinguished Writer in Residence at New York University, McBride also appears with his colorful jazz band, highlighting his amusing stories of redemption, forgiveness, and identity with wonderful musical accompaniment.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- The Color of Water: A Meditation on Identity
- The Liberal Arts Life: From Jazz to Journalism to Novel to Script
- Appreciating Cultural Differences
- Inspire to Live: A Lecture/Performance on Learning To Fail