



Greg Chako

International Hospitality Executive
Creating the Perfect Ambience With Music

Executive Portfolio

GREG CHAKO

International Hospitality Executive | Arts Entrepreneur | Music Educator

Creating the Perfect Ambience with Music—CincyJazzman.com

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Greg Chako is an international hospitality executive, arts entrepreneur, educator, and acclaimed guitarist, composer, and bandleader with more than four decades of professional experience in music and more than three decades serving luxury hospitality organizations. Entering the Asian market in Hong Kong in 1992, he has partnered with senior hospitality leaders to create distinctive guest environments through thoughtfully conceived, booked, and managed live entertainment.

In 1994, Greg founded Chako Productions Pte. Ltd. in Singapore. In less than two years, he built it into one of **the region's leading entertainment companies**, with more than 30 full-time resident artists performing six nights each week under long-term contracts and annual company turnover exceeding S\$1 million.

Greg's responsibilities ultimately reached an extraordinary scale: he simultaneously booked and managed every live-entertainment engagement across The Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore, The Oriental Singapore, The Fullerton Singapore, and the two-property Westin/Raffles City complex. His property-wide oversight spanned lounges, restaurants, lobbies, corporate and special events, cultural presentations, and signature entertainment destinations including the Equinox Complex.

Greg's additional hospitality relationships in Asia included Mandarin Oriental, The Ritz-Carlton, The Peninsula, and Grand Hyatt in Hong Kong; The Pan Pacific, Four Seasons, Hilton, and Hyatt in Singapore; The Westin Shanghai at Bund Center; and The Imperial Hotel Tokyo, Tokyo Dome Hotel, Keio Plaza Hotel, ANA Hotels, and InterContinental Yokohama Grand in Japan, among others.

Beyond hospitality, Greg created and managed entertainment for leading corporations and luxury brands including Louis Vuitton, Tiffany, Cartier, Chanel, Coca-Cola, Visa, HSBC, Goldman Sachs, Merrill Lynch, CNN, Singapore Airlines, Toyota and Nissan. His wider portfolio encompassed government agencies, diplomatic missions, prestigious private clubs, and international cultural organizations.

Greg's career has been built less on transactions than on trust. Hospitality leaders who experienced his work repeatedly invited him to assume greater responsibilities and develop programs for new properties because they trusted his judgment, professionalism, relationships, and commitment to their guests.

Known for building authentic relationships across cultures and every level of an organization, Greg works as naturally with chief executives, hotel managers, diplomats, and government officials as he does with front-line employees, artists, educators, private clients, and guests. He listens carefully, communicates respectfully, and approaches people without airs or pretense.

Greg brings people, cultures, and music together to enrich the guest experience and build the trusted relationships that sustain exceptional hospitality.

The right live entertainment partner becomes an extension of a property's hospitality team—not an outside vendor.

LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS — A Career Built on Trust

The defining characteristic of Greg Chako's career has been the continuity of trusted **executive relationships**. Rather than beginning again with each opportunity, senior hospitality leaders repeatedly expanded his responsibilities, introduced him to new organizations, and entrusted him with increasingly significant leadership roles.

Greg welcomes prospective employers to conduct their own due diligence by speaking directly with the hospitality executives who worked alongside him.

Executive Relationships

Tim Steckbeck

Pan Pacific Singapore

M. P. S. Puri

Raffles Hotel • Raffles International • The Fullerton Singapore

Richard Helfer

Chairman & CEO, Raffles International

Dean Winter → Scott Swank

Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong • The Oriental Singapore

Tracy Mercer

Four Seasons Hotel Singapore

Martin Jones → David Shackleton

Starwood Hotels

Alp Ozkan → Lee Kanbur

Westin Singapore • The Westin Shanghai at the Bund Center

Olivier Heuchenne

The Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore

The Pattern

Throughout Greg Chako's career, opportunities consistently followed the same progression:

Initial Opportunity → Consistent Delivery → Executive Trust → Expanded Responsibility → Long-Term Partnership → New Opportunity

That pattern has defined Greg's international career for more than four decades.

1978–1983 • Long Island, New York

Following his studies at Berklee College of Music, Chako remained in the New York area, supporting himself through several professional culinary positions while pursuing intensive independent musical development. He trained under Executive Chef **Ohashi**, worked for the **Guitar Workshop** in Roslyn, and practiced guitar up to eight hours daily while studying privately with pianist **Dave Frank**, whose emphasis on swing, improvisation, and the bebop tradition profoundly influenced his artistic direction. During this period he also performed jazz fusion with drummer **Dave Clive** and bassist **Randy Coven** at **The Little Club** in Roslyn.

1983–1985 • Amherst, Massachusetts

Worked as **Poissonnier** at the **Lord Jeffery Inn** under Executive Chef **Hugh Loughlin** while practicing and rehearsing extensively with bassist **Rich Downs**. After persuading hotel management to establish a regular jazz engagement for the duo in the hotel lounge, Chako transitioned from five nights in the kitchen and two nights performing to music full-time. Although encouraged to pursue a culinary career, including a recommendation toward the Culinary Institute of America, he instead chose to pursue music professionally.

Produced a regional jazz concert series through a **Massachusetts Council on the Arts** grant, securing the required matching sponsorship from local businesses. The series featured artists including **Bill Hardman**, **Ed Jones**, **Avery Sharpe**, and others. Chako subsequently founded the **Amherst Jazz Society**, launching the organization with a major concert featuring **Slide Hampton**, **Ray Copeland**, and the **UMass All-Stars**.

1985–1987 • Cincinnati, Ohio

Returning to Cincinnati, Chako taught guitar, performed throughout the region, and frequently substituted for **Cal Collins** at the **Hilton Netherland Plaza**. During this period he also rehearsed with **Cohesion**, the contemporary jazz group co-founded by drummer **Bobby Scott** and bassist **Jim Anderson**. Following a Cohesion rehearsal, Bobby Scott invited Chako to stop by **Doc's Place** and sit in. After hearing him perform, owner **Dr. Ronald ("Doc") Cheek** invited him to return the following Monday to discuss it. Chako arrived with a typewriter and, rather than simply accepting a playing engagement, proposed booking and managing the club's entire weekly jazz program. Dr. Cheek accepted the proposal.

Walking across the street after signing the agreement, Chako opened the first business account for **Chako Productions**, marking the beginning of what would later become an international entertainment company. He programmed four nights of live jazz each week featuring both Cincinnati musicians and nationally recognized artists, selecting performers solely on musical ability. His house band featured **Bobby Scott** (drums), **Wayne Yeager** (Hammond B-3 organ), **Dave Blinkenstaff** (tenor saxophone), and vocalist **Francine Griffin**, who had performed with **Charlie Parker** and whom Chako coaxed out of retirement. He produced monthly performance calendars, wrote press releases, placed feature stories, and generated extensive media coverage for both the venue and its artists.

1987–1992 • New York City

Relocating to New York City, Chako temporarily stepped away from professional performance to pursue a career in industrial real estate with Kaplon-Belo Associates. He established the company's first-year sales record, continued as a six-figure producer, became a member of the President's Club, and represented industrial and business clients throughout the New York metropolitan area.

Nominated by **Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden**, Chako served on **Brooklyn Community Board 1**, the **Parks and Recreation Committee**, and the **Steering Committee** of his local block association. He also worked with the **Brooklyn Borough President's Office** and the **Office of Economic Development** on business and commercial development.

During this period, intensive practice of solo chord-melody arrangements resulted in severe carpal tunnel syndrome, forcing him to stop playing. Rather than undergo surgery, Chako pursued a rehabilitation program recommended by concert pianist and pedagogue **Dorothy Taubman**, studying with lutenist and classical guitarist **Pat O'Brien** while incorporating stretching, yoga, warm-up exercises, and hand-conditioning techniques into his daily routine. By the time he relocated to Hong Kong in 1992, he had largely recovered. The thumb technique he developed during that period has remained his trademark style ever since.

1992–1994 • Hong Kong

In 1992, Chako relocated to his wife's hometown of Hong Kong after she accepted a position with FedEx. Continuing his recovery from carpal tunnel syndrome, he studied Yang-style Tai Chi and Shaolin Pole five days a week under Raymond Chiu. Combined with warm-up exercises using Chinese Baoding balls and weekly tennis lessons, this disciplined regimen enabled him to resume his intensive practice.

Chako spent his early months exploring Hong Kong's live music scene, introducing himself to musicians and venues. **Tony Carpio** invited him to sit in with his band at **The Dickens Bar**. He became a regular at **The Jazz Club** in Lan Kwai Fong, where he met many of his future collaborators. Pianist and singer **John Meir**, who taught at the International School, gave Chako his first regular engagements. More importantly, before relocating to Portugal, Meir entrusted Chako with his music contacts and engagements.

In 1994, F&B Manager **Dean Winter** invited Chako to assemble a jazz trio for a fortnight of jazz at the Captain's Bar of the **Mandarin Oriental**. Chako used the opportunity to record his first album, *Everything I Love*. The successful engagement became a weekly residency.

The relationships Chako developed led to engagements throughout the territory. He registered **Chako Productions** as a sole proprietorship, providing entertainment for hotels, private clubs, corporations, and civic organizations. Chako also appeared with the **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra** and performed regularly at many of the territory's leading hotels and private clubs. In late 1994, he relocated to Singapore following his wife's transfer with FedEx.

1994–2003 • Singapore

Following his relocation to Singapore in early 1994 after his wife's transfer with FedEx, Chako spent several months becoming acquainted with the city's hospitality and music communities. In September, he incorporated **Chako Productions Pte. Ltd.** and secured an Employment Pass as its Managing Director.

Chako had pre-booked performances at **The Grand Hyatt Hong Kong** during the Christmas holidays but, upon returning to Singapore, secured an initial three-month contract at the **Pan Pacific Singapore** beginning April 1, 1995, featuring drummer **Redd Holt** and bassist **Belinda Moody**. **After the contract was extended, Chako Productions sponsored vocalist Jean DuShon, bassist Victor Gaskin, and pianist Mario Serio from the United States**, enabling the company to continue the residency at the Pan Pacific while Chako established a new local trio at the **Bar & Billiard Room at Raffles Hotel**.

Through Chako Productions, Chako's activities expanded well beyond performing. He developed and managed entire entertainment programs for many of Singapore's leading hospitality properties, including **The Westin, The Oriental Singapore, The Ritz-Carlton Millenia, The Fullerton Hotel, and Raffles International Hotels & Resorts**, while maintaining ongoing engagements with **The American Club**, many other private clubs, **Fortune 100 companies**, civic organizations, and government agencies.

Major performances included the **CHIJMES** concert series, the **Heineken Jazz Festival** in Kuala Lumpur, the **American Women's Association Fringe Festival** at Fort Canning Park—where Chako performed with a ten-piece band while Chako Productions produced nearly the entire musical program—and a **Miles Davis Tribute** at the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

During this period, **Chako recorded four critically acclaimed albums: *Sudden Impact*, *Live at Raffles*, *Integration*, and *Integration II***. His Singapore career became the subject of the documentary *An American Cat in the Lion City*. His work received extensive coverage in *The Straits Times*, *The Business Times*, and other regional media.

Alongside his hospitality activities, Chako maintained an active private teaching studio, mentoring professional musicians and classically trained performers. He also taught a weekly guitar class at **LaSalle School of the Arts** and presented the lecture-performance “Communication in the Small Jazz Ensemble” at the **International Guitar Festival Singapore**.

Relationships developed in Singapore with hospitality executives **Alp Özkan** and **Lee Kanbur** led directly to the next phase of Chako's career in Shanghai.

2002–2003 • Shanghai

In September 2002, during the pre-opening period of **The Westin Shanghai at Bund Center**, **Alp Özkan** and **Lee Kanbur** invited Chako to establish and lead the resident jazz program at the hotel's **Niche Bar**. Both had previously worked with him at The Westin in Singapore. Chako accepted an initial six-month engagement that included full accommodation.

Through **Chako Productions**, he imported bassist **Donald Jackson**, pianist **Jack Holland**, and vocalist **Dee Dee McNeil** from the United States as the program developed. In addition to leading the band, Chako oversaw its personnel, musical direction, guest engagement, and coordination with the hotel's advertising department. While based in Shanghai, he kept Chako Productions operating through two employees in Singapore, where the company continued booking and managing entertainment.

The residency increased revenue, attracted favorable press and customer correspondence, and was featured on Chinese television. Reports described Chako's band as "the finest jazz act to ever play in the PRC." As the initial engagement approached completion, Chako and the hotel were preparing to sign a one-year extension, but those plans ended with the SARS outbreak in 2003.

In a 2014 letter, **Martin B. Jones**, then **Vice President of Food and Beverage, Asia Pacific for Starwood Hotels & Resorts**, wrote that The Westin knew Chako was "**the right person to oversee the entertainment for that facility**," adding, "It is unique the way he so successfully straddles both worlds: creative arts and business."

2003–2009 • Japan: Transition and Teaching

Following the SARS-related end of the Shanghai engagement, Chako and his wife **Takako** moved to Japan in June 2003. He initially entrusted **Chako Productions Pte. Ltd.** to **Alina Ramirez** and its remaining Singapore staff, continuing to participate in the business by telephone and computer. After approximately one year, when it became clear that he would not return to Singapore, Chako dissolved the company.

Shortly after their arrival in Japan, Takako was diagnosed with Stage IV breast cancer. Her treatment and care became the central focus of Chako's life, preventing him from resuming his performing career. Takako died in Japan on July 29, 2004.

During his six years in Japan, Chako taught more than 5,000 private and group English lessons through **Berlitz Japan** in Tokyo and Yokohama. His work included Business English courses for corporate clients including **Hitachi**, **Nissan**, **Shiseido**, and **Häfele**. Berlitz evaluators described him as "**excellent**" and "**gifted**," noting "an intense interest in the personal development of his students and a great sensitivity to their individual needs and cultural background."

2005–2009 • Japan: Return to Music

Following Takako's death, Chako began rebuilding his performing and recording career. The first major step was the double album *Where We Find Ourselves*, recorded as a tribute to her. Its all-original program included two vocal tracks, with lyrics to the title composition reflecting upon Chako's life after losing his wife.

Although the musicians lived in Japan, most of the album was recorded at **Lion Studios** in Singapore by **John Herbert**, who also mixed and mastered the project. The two vocal tracks were recorded in Japan by **Michael Fogarty**. The recording ensemble included bassist **Mark Tourian**, drummer and percussionist **Mark DeRose**, trombonist **Pat Hallaran**, and multi-instrumentalists **Andy Bevan** and **Robbie Belgrade**. The album marked the rebirth of Chako's performing and recording career. Reviewing the album, **Chris Spector of Midwest Record Recap** wrote that Chako "straddles being familiar and unique in the same interval with such style that you're sure you've been here before but you know you haven't."

Japan's hospitality and corporate entertainment market operated largely through local representation. Although he did not speak Japanese, Chako's reliability and professionalism made him a regular choice among agents. While he booked his jazz-club appearances directly, Japanese agents secured his hotel residencies, private functions, and corporate engagements.

From 2005 through 2008, Chako led a weekly piano-guitar engagement at **The Imperial Hotel Tokyo**. A subsequent ten-month residency at the **InterContinental Yokohama Grand** provided the foundation for his Collaboration Quartet, composed of Japanese and American musicians. His agent-booked work also included engagements for **Louis Vuitton**, **Tiffany**, **Cartier**, **Montblanc**, **Chanel**, **Adidas**, **Tod's**, **Takashimaya**, **Nissan**, **Toyota**, **Goldman Sachs**, **Merrill Lynch**, **Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi**, and other corporate and luxury clients.

Chako independently developed an active jazz-club schedule, performing repeatedly at **JZ Brat**, **B-Flat**, **Bar Bar Bar**, **Motion Blue**, **The Cotton Club**, **Body and Soul**, and other venues as both a leader and sideman. His Japan-based ensembles included **Gene Jackson**, **Brent Nussey**, **Daiki Yasukagawa**, **Yasuhiro Hasegawa**, **Hiroshi Tanaka**, **Homei Matsumoto**, and **Taro Koyama**. He also performed with drummer **Tommy Campbell** and trumpeter **Tetsuya Tatsumi**.

Chako released four albums during this period: *Where We Find Ourselves* (2005), *Two's Company*, *Three's a Crowd* (2006), *Paint a Picture, Tell a Story* (2007), and *Everybody's Got a Name* (2008). All except the duet album were recorded by **John Herbert** at **Lion Studios** in Singapore. *Paint a Picture, Tell a Story*, featuring **Don Byron** and **Delfeayo Marsalis**, appeared on the JazzWeek, CMJ, and RMR jazz charts.

While in Japan, Chako completed an interdisciplinary Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Performance and Music Business online through **SUNY Empire State College**. After briefly pursuing graduate study in Applied Linguistics, he chose music and returned to the United States in June 2009 to begin a Master of Music degree.

2009–2017 • Graduate Study and Educational Development

Chako returned to the United States in June 2009 to pursue graduate study at **William Paterson University**, earning a Master of Music degree in Jazz Studies and Arranging in 2011 with a 3.9 GPA.

Seeking an ensemble capable of performing his original compositions, Chako received permission to select the musicians for a group directed by pianist **Mulgrew Miller**. The ensemble became devoted to Chako's music, which Miller described as "different"—recognition of the individual artistic voice Chako had worked to develop. Miller became an important mentor, while trumpeter **Cecil Bridgewater** provided additional guidance and support.

Guitarist **Gene Bertoncini**, although not one of Chako's formal teachers, attended each of his recitals and became an influential supporter. Hearing Bertoncini perform a solo-guitar arrangement of "Misty" inspired Chako to explore the orchestral possibilities of the guitar. During the MM program, Chako also discovered an aptitude for research, writing, and the process of developing and refining complex ideas.

In fall 2011, Chako was one of two students admitted that year to the Doctor of Musical Arts program in Jazz and Contemporary Media at the **Eastman School of Music**. His studies included big-band arranging with **Bill Dobbins**, independent work with pianist **Harold Danko**, and extensive graduate coursework in ethnomusicology. From 2012 through 2014, he served as a teaching assistant for student jazz ensembles.

Visiting professor **Dr. Beth Bullard**, who holds doctorates in musicology and ethnomusicology, became another influential mentor. In her advanced seminar on Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, Chako wrote "Indian Influence in the Ring's Happy Ending." Bullard later helped secure Eastman's approval for an individualized research seminar that produced his ethnographic field report, "A Study of Bhajan Ensembles at Spiritual Programs of Mata Amritanandamayi Devi."

Chako completed three DMA recitals incorporating original compositions and arrangements in solo, small-ensemble, and seventeen-piece jazz-ensemble settings. His lecture-recital, "Arranging Topics for Solo Jazz Guitar: How to Write for the Guitar Instead of Just Playing What You Know," was nominated among the best DMA lectures of the year. The project also produced his first solo-guitar album, *My World on Six Strings*, which Bertoncini described as "a total orchestra, the complete package."

Chako completed the DMA coursework, recitals, teaching responsibilities, and research requirements but did not undertake the remaining comprehensive examinations in classical music history. He concluded his Eastman studies in spring 2015 with ABD status.

During his Eastman years, Chako lived in East Irondequoit. He married **Jocelyn "Jay" Eswagen** in Singapore in January 2012, but the U.S. immigration process kept them apart for approximately two years. After receiving permanent-resident status in January 2015, Jay joined him in Rochester. They remained there until moving to Cincinnati in 2017.

2017–2024 • Cincinnati: Return, Teaching, and Rebuilding

In 2017, Chako and his wife, **Jocelyn “Jay” Chako**, moved from Rochester to Cincinnati to be closer to his mother. After nearly three decades away from his hometown, he began rebuilding his professional life within a music community that had changed considerably since his departure.

During the transition, Chako supported himself through work outside music while gradually reestablishing his performing and teaching activities. He resumed playing with Cincinnati-area musicians, taught through **McCutcheon Music** and **Guitar Center**, and developed an expanding private studio. His performances included the **Jamey Aebersold–Lexington Public Library concert series**, **WorldFest**, the **Harrodsburg Jazz Festival**, and *Jazz: The American Music of Freedom*, presented at **Memorial Hall** in tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The COVID-19 shutdown brought most live performance to a halt in 2020 but accelerated the growth of Chako’s online teaching. Following his mother’s death on August 31, 2021, he decided to center his remaining professional life on music. In 2022, he signed with **Mint400 Records and Raining Music**. Late that year, *Friends, Old & New* ended a recording hiatus of more than eight years and began the most active period of recorded production in his career.

By 2022, Chako was teaching through **Oxford Music Academy**, **Guitar Center**, and his private studio. Responding to students who wanted experience playing with others, he established weekly ensemble workshops at his home, teaching accompaniment, communication, and the practical responsibilities of ensemble performance.

Two students subsequently became professional collaborators. Vocalist **Al West Jr.** began studying piano and musicianship with Chako after reading one of his Jazz Guitar Today articles. Chako later served as musical director and executive producer of West’s first album, *I Wish You Love* (2024). He also arranged, directed, and produced harmonica player and vocalist **David S. Burk’s** album *David and the HeartStrings* (2024), featuring bassist **David Lloyd**. Both albums were released by **Meager Morsels**, recording engineer **Joshua Deitner’s** label, and managed by Chako in association with Mint400 Records.

The Mint400 relationship also brought earlier work into a continuing catalogue. In 2023, the label issued three previously unreleased performances from Chako’s years in Japan: *Tokyo Live!*, *Yokohama Live!*, and *Christmas Time: Live in Izu Nagaoka*. The same year, Chako released *A Place for Bass*, an album of original chamber-jazz duets recorded with bassist **Mason Daugherty**. Bassist **Rufus Reid** wrote that the musicians were “attached at the hip,” while guitarist **Pete Bernstein** cited the recording’s “phenomenal interplay, great compositions, and a vibe that is all its own.”

Chako followed with *Life After 40* and *Standard Roots* in 2024. *Life After 40* presented ten Latin-influenced original compositions recorded with Daugherty and drummer **Michael Meloy**, with percussion added by Chako’s former Singapore colleague **Steve Thornton**. These and Chako’s other Cincinnati recordings were engineered by **Joshua Deitner** at **Great Wave Recording**.

2023–2026 • Cincinnati: Performance, Hospitality, and Recording

In December 2023, Chako traveled to Miami for two concerts developed with jazz writer, broadcaster, and longtime supporter **Edward Blanco**. He performed with pianist **Jim Gasior**, bassist **Jaime Ousley**, and drummer **Ludwig Afonso** at the **WDNA Jazz Gallery** and the **Miami Jazz Cooperative**. The WDNA performance was recorded and released the following year as *The Miami Project*, documenting Chako's original Latin-jazz writing through a stellar Miami ensemble.

During this period, a nine-day hospitalization with sepsis interrupted Chako's performing schedule and led to the cancellation of a planned tour. After returning home, the first composition he began was "Second Chance." The experience initiated a new body of work that would eventually become *Hard Bop: For the Record*.

In November 2024, Chako began a six-month Saturday engagement at **Sorrento's Italian Joint** with bassist **David Lloyd**. The initial term was expected to end in spring because the restaurant had not traditionally maintained comparable customer traffic during the summer. In May 2025, General Manager **Kyle Lucas** told Chako that customer numbers had increased significantly and attributed the improvement to the music. Sorrento's extended the engagement through the summer, and the weekly residency has continued without interruption. Performances recorded there on January 2 and 3, 2026, became the album *Come to Sorrento's*, released that March.

Chako also performed repeatedly at **Caffè Vivace**, Cincinnati's principal dedicated jazz club, where he presented his own ensembles and projects with other artists. His additional engagements included a Platinum VIP event at **Belterra Park Gaming**, performances at **The 1931** inside the **Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza**, the **Camargo Club**, a **Morgan Stanley** VIP event, and a private birthday celebration at **Morton's The Steakhouse**, as well as weddings, board meetings, country clubs, corporate functions, and private events. By July 2026, his **Google Business Profile** had accumulated 198 five-star reviews across these and other engagements.

Chako's recording activity continued with *Comfort Food* and *Merry Christmas from Greg Chako in 2025*. Selected earlier recordings were also returned to circulation, while *Greg Chako Live!* assembled material from *Everything I Love* and performances originally issued on *Live at Raffles*.

The compositions begun following Chako's hospitalization developed into *Hard Bop: For the Record*, a piano-less quintet album featuring **Brooks Giles** on tenor and soprano saxophones, **Spencer Merk** on trombone, David Lloyd on bass, and **Alex Merk** on drums. The absence of piano places Chako's guitar at the harmonic center of the ensemble while the two horns provide its principal melodic profile.

The album contains ten original compositions. "Second Chance" grew directly from Chako's recovery, while other pieces acknowledge musical influences including Bud Powell, Billy Higgins, Horace Silver, Art Blakey, and the hard-bop tradition. Chako composed and arranged the complete program, recorded by **Joshua Deitner** at **Great Wave Recording**.

Chako is scheduled to present the album in concert at **Caffè Vivace** on September 3, 2026, one day before its worldwide release by **Mint400 Records**. *Hard Bop: For the Record* is his 25th album as a leader. Including two additional albums for which he served as musical director and producer, it is the 27th album project he has led through recording and release.

2024–Present • Leadership, Education, and Community

As his performing, recording, and teaching activities expanded, Chako became increasingly involved in Cincinnati's business and civic communities. He joined **Business Network International**, earning its **Centennial Performer Award** before serving as president of another Cincinnati chapter from September 2025 through May 2026. The experience informed his blog "Networking for Success" and strengthened his work in relationship development and professional leadership.

In 2025, Chako was inducted into the **Cincinnati Jazz Hall of Fame**, recognizing a career encompassing performance, composition, recording, education, and international cultural exchange.

Chako also continued writing about music and professional practice. His articles for **Jazz Guitar Today** included "Things They Typically Don't Teach You in Music Schools" and "Playing Honestly." In 2026, he became a contributor to **Hotel Executive**, extending his writing into hospitality leadership, live-entertainment strategy, brand identity, and guest experience.

In May 2026, Chako founded **EverybodyLovesMusic**, subsequently approved as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Serving as its president, he established it to connect musicians, educators, healthcare providers, nonprofits, funders, and civic organizations through music, education, wellness, and community engagement. EverybodyLovesMusic was structured as a connector and convener, developing collaborations among existing organizations and the communities they serve.

In June 2026, Chako launched **Melody Mastery**, an online educational program developed from his experience as a performer, composer, arranger, and teacher. Its curriculum comprises 40 lessons, 40 chord-melody arrangements, and eight courses covering harmony, improvisation, ensemble performance, arranging, professional practice, and artistic development.

That year, he also became a member of the **Rotary Club of Cincinnati**, connecting his work with a broader network of business, nonprofit, and civic leaders.

These activities extend work present throughout Chako's career: organizing musicians, developing entertainment programs, teaching individuals and ensembles, producing recordings, writing original music, and building relationships across professional and cultural boundaries. His current work brings those functions together through performance, hospitality, education, publishing, nonprofit leadership, and civic participation.



Now 68, Chako brings this record to an open question:

Does a position still exist for someone able to unite hospitality, music, education, production, and community leadership, or is the next such position waiting to be created?



Chako Productions LLC
CincyJazzman.com
jazzman@gregchako.com
513-873-8772
[LinkedIn.com/in/gregchako](https://www.linkedin.com/in/gregchako)