

## AL HENDERSON BIOGRAPHY

Bassist, composer, arranger, leader and music educator AL HENDERSON, (MFA Musicology, 1983) formed his group the Al Henderson Quintet as a way to perform and record his numerous original jazz compositions. As a composer, he has created a large and distinctive body of work - pieces which form the bulk of the repertoire of the bands he leads. Stuart Broomer has written "...bassist Al Henderson is the real thing, a composer in the tradition of Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus, whose works have distinctive energy and melodic and harmonic character..." (Toronto Life, January 2009). In 1995 he was recognized both as the Jazz Report Composer of the Year and winner of the prestigious SOCAN Award for Original Jazz Composition for the large work "Ellingtonia". His compositions have appeared on recordings by the Al Henderson Septet, Sextet, Quintet, and Quartet, Time Warp, Barry Romberg's Random Access, Richard Whiteman, Alex Dean, Don Pullen & Jane Bunnett, and Shox Johnson & the Jive Bombers.

Al's most recent recording, *Taiga* (CRST 138), released in the fall of 2012, features his regular quintet with Alex Dean (saxes, bass clarinet), Pat LaBarbera (saxes, narration), pianist Richard Whiteman and drummer Barry Romberg. Baritone saxophonist David Mott appears as a guest artist on three tracks while noted cellists Matt Brubeck and Mark Chambers, first heard with the group on *Regeneration* (CRST CD132) return for three others. *Icicles*, a piece inspired by the American poet Robert Pinsky gives a preview of a series of pieces inspired by Pinsky's poems to be performed and recorded at a later date.

The band originally began as the Al Henderson Quartet in 1993 featuring Alex Dean (saxes, oboe, bass clarinet), pianist Richard Whiteman and drummer Barry Romberg. The band's first recording - *Dinosaur Dig* (CRST CD103) - was named one of the top three jazz recordings of 1995 by CBC Morningside. In 1998, it expanded to a quintet with the addition of the internationally renowned saxophonist Pat LaBarbera (saxes, flute) to create the uniquely versatile and powerful front line featured on the recording *Urban Landscape* (CRST CD108). Geoff Chapman described the band's live performances as "...consistently stimulating...a healthy mix of drive and fascinating adventures..." (Toronto Star) while Mark Miller called the band ..."a thinking fan's quintet" (Globe & Mail).

In October of 2004, Al Henderson released a second quintet recording of live performances from the Montreal Bistro in Toronto - *Fathers and Sons* (CRST CD124). Ted O'Reilly wrote "Al Henderson works without a net, but you're never in danger of not having a good time..." (Whole Note) while Richard Bourcier stated: "this session has it all." (JazzReview.com)

In 2008, *Regeneration* (CRST CD132) was recorded with the quintet being expanded to a septet with the addition of cellists Matt Brubeck and Mark Chambers. *Regeneration* was nominated for the 2010 Juno for Traditional Jazz Album of the Year. Geoff Chapman has written "...a formidable bandleader...and composer...work of both quality and interest..." (Whole Note).

Al has performed as a sideman over the years with many jazz artists including Jane Bunnett, Arnett Cobb, Hank Crawford, Sonny Fortune, Slim Gaillard, Shox Johnson and the Jive Bombers, Jimmy Knepper, Diana Krall, Flip Phillips, John Tchay, and Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson.

He is also the co-leader of the influential group Time Warp, one of Canada's longest running jazz ensembles with multiple Juno nominations to their credit. Established in the early 1980s, the group has released nine recordings, played across Canada as well as in the US and Venezuela, and won numerous awards. In 2009, Time Warp was asked to perform in honour of York University's 50 Anniversary with a special concert by the Time Warp Jazz Orchestra comprised of fifteen full and part-time jazz faculty of York University. The performance included new arrangements of compositions performed by Time Warp over the years.

An Associate Professor of music at York University in Toronto, Al has served as Graduate Program Director (Interim), Jazz Area Coordinator and Director of the York University Jazz Orchestra for nearly a decade, producing custom arrangements for many hours of student performances annually. Since 1982, he has focused his teaching and research in the areas of jazz studies on composition, arranging, theory, history, performance as well as ethnomusicology at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. His Master's thesis, "Improvisation in the Recorded Works of Coleman Hawkins, 1932-34" (1981) was one of the first Master's theses completed in jazz studies in Canada.

He has, along with fellow musicians Mike Murley and Barry Elmes been instrumental in supporting recorded Canadian jazz as a co-owner of Cornerstone Records Inc.. Since 1993, the label has released thirty-eight Canadian jazz recordings with several more soon to be released.

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