



Derrick Michaels

SAXOPHONIST / COMPOSER /
EDUCATOR

Details

Baltimore, MD
4109350530
derricksax@gmail.com

Skills

Saxophone Performance
Music Instruction
Improvisation
Concert Production
Leadership
Composition

Links

www.baltimoresaxophone.com
baltimoresaxophone.org

Professional Summary

Baltimore-native Derrick Michaels is a tenor saxophonist, improviser, and teacher with a deep sound and a bold, imaginative presence in the creative music community. With roots in both the lyrical and exploratory branches of the creative saxophone tradition, his wide expressive palette brings a soulful, melodic sincerity to a wide range of musical environments.

Downbeat magazine describes Michaels as wielding a “large sound and free flowing style”. The Baltimore Jazz Alliance says: “Derrick Michaels' saxophone playing comes right out of his soul; the instrument sounds like a human voice.”

EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Jazz Faculty, Towson University, Towson, MD

JANUARY 2025 – MAY 2025

In Spring 2025, I will be an adjunct Jazz Saxophone and Jazz Composition instructor while the jazz department head (Jason Rigby) is on sabbatical. Duties include weekly applied jazz saxophone lessons and weekly jazz composition lessons as well as hosting weekly masterclasses in collaboration with the full university jazz faculty.

Saxophone Instructor, Baltimore School for the Arts

JANUARY 2023

Guiding driven young jazz and classical musicians along in their creative processes, I design curricula that support their growth in areas of musicianship (tone, technique, reading, ear training) and musicality (interpretation, improvisation, composition, and concert programming). Recent graduates of my studio have received full tuition scholarships at Peabody Conservatory and Berklee College of Music, as well as participating in the "Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz National Peer-to-Peer All Star Jazz Quintet."

Freelance Music Educator

JUNE 2003 – PRESENT

Intensive guidance and mentorship for advanced musicians in the areas of improvisation, saxophone mastery, jazz language, and developing a personal creative voice

Guest Lecturer on the subjects of Musical Creativity & Improvisation

- "Saxophone Masterclass" - Towson University
- "Jazz Improvisation III" - Peabody Conservatory
- "Global Improvisation" - Peabody Conservatory
- "History of Jazz in Baltimore" - Notre Dame of Maryland University
- "World Music Ensemble" - Towson University
- "Improvisation Ensemble" - McDaniel College
- "History of Jazz" - Harford Community College
- "Baltimore Jazz Education Project" - Music & Arts Center
- Guest performer with drummer Billy Hart and the Peabody Jazz Orchestra
- Guest performer at both McDaniel College & Carroll Community College with the Jon Seligman Quartet & Quintet.
- Jazz Ensemble at Loyola Blakefield High School
- Guest clinician at Stages Music Arts

Private Instructor - Saxophone & Improvisation

- Private Studio 2003-present

- The Park School 2012-2014
- Music and Arts Center 2012-2014
- Dundalk Music Center 2007-2010

Freelance Saxophonist, Baltimore

JANUARY 2003 – PRESENT

Tenor & Soprano Saxophone performance in an infinite range of styles and musical contexts in the DMV locale and beyond.

- Notable collaborators include:

Ellery Eskelin, Susan Alcorn, Michael Formanek, Dave Ballou, John Lee, Mike Kuhl, Phillip Greenlief, John Dierker, Zach Swanson, Alex Weber, Eric Kennedy, Jon Seligman, Theljon Allen, Jeff Reed, Sarah Hughes, Jamal Moore, Phil Cunneff, Ben Frock, Chris Pumphrey, Jacqueline Pollauf, Matt Frazao, Adam Hopkins, Kevin Gift, Ledah Finck, Tom Swafford, Dalius Naujo, and more.

- As a bandleader or co-leader:

Derrick Michaels Trio, Born From Silence, The Great Unfolding, Blood Moon Quintet, Michaels-Ballou-Formanek-Kuhl, Trio Xolo, Michaels-Weber-Kuhl, Talking Points, Anagnorisis, Hot Air & Horse Hair, Sui Generis, Tonglen, The Honor System, Family Bonding, Daring Greatly, Pale Blue Dot, The Movement Trio, Level Zero, Birdsong, and more.

- As a side-person:

John Lee's Out of Body Quartet, Michael Formanek's "The Band That Shall Remain Nameless", Theljon Allen's Universal Language, Phil Cunneff Trio, Mike Kuhl Trio, Station North Jazz Orchestra, Baltimore Boom Bap Society, While You Were Sleeping, Out of Your Head Collective, Chris Pumphrey Sextet, Music for Quiet Spaces, Kinetic Renick, Mondawmen, Charm City Brass Band, Memetics, Jazz Lunch, Ben Frock's Love Unit, Friday Night Book Club, Deep Vision Dance Company, Brent & Co., Outcalls, Softhouse, Rod Hamilton, Supercity, Vinny Vegas, Octaves, Speakers of the House, Ellen Cherry, The Movement Trio, Ghostmode, Alcoder, Sly 45, Bachelor Boys Band, and more.

Creator & Presenter, Derrick Michaels Presents: "Posture of Possibility" @ An Die Musik, Baltimore

JANUARY 2020 – PRESENT

- **Monthly improvisation-centric concert series in Baltimore's premiere listening room for jazz and classical music.**
- Each monthly concert features one vital Baltimore-based composer/improviser under age 30. Following a brief solo performance, the featured musician is showcased within two contrasting groups, each performing cutting-edge, spontaneously composed music, free from idiomatic restrictions.
- This series offers an innovative "next step" program for young adult musicians, effectively helping these burgeoning creative individuals to embody their leadership potential by cultivating a space in which their contributions may flourish. The necessary elements of successful presentation are demonstrated and the programming process is supervised along the way.
- Presented in partnership with An Die Musik, Michaels oversees, creates and handles all promotional responsibilities along with emceeing, performing, and documenting each concert on video.
- Each concert is self-promoted through a holistic program of graphic fliers, promotional videos, targeted email outreach, and word of mouth.

- Video recordings of each concert are edited and archived in order to document the vital work being done in this pivotal concert series.

Presenter, Organizer, Performer, "Derrick Michaels Presents" @ An Die Musik, Baltimore

JANUARY 2019 – DECEMBER 2019

- **Monthly concert series featuring spontaneously composed music in Baltimore's premier listening room for jazz and classical music.**
- Mission Statement: "The wholehearted expression of music has the potential to uplift the spirit and heal our hearts. These 12 concerts are representative of a creative continuum which is designed to challenge convention & elude classification. I've stationed my tenor saxophone at the axis of a distinctive array of ensembles, putting full trust in improvisation as a potent unifying force across musical boundaries. The mission is to deliver music of substance - embracing the community, while affirming the exceptionally personal nature of creative process for the improvising musician."
- Featured Musicians: Ellery Eskelin *tenor saxophone*, Susan Alcorn *pedal steel guitar*, John Dierker *reeds*, Michael Formanek *bass*, Dave Ballou *trumpet*, Tom Swafford *violin*, Zach Swanson *bass*, Derek Wiegmann *bass*, Savino Palumbo *piano*, Alex Weber *bass*, Dominic Smith *drums*, Dalius Naujo *drums*, Theljon Allen *trumpet*, Eric Kennedy *drums*, Sarah Hughes *winds*, Zack Branch *cello*, Mike Kuhl *drums*, Jaron Lamar Davis *drums*, Chris Pumphrey *piano/saxophone*, Erin Connelly *trumpet*, Nicole Connelly *trombone*, Andrew Hadro *baritone saxophone*, Jacqueline Pollauf *harp*, Brent Madsen *trumpet*, Jamal Moore *reeds*, Jeff Reed *bass*, Laura Banner *cello*

Selected Discography

Erin Connelly Quartet - "Fruitful" 2023

Derrick Michaels - "Solo Saxophone Vol. 1 Live at An Die Musik" 2021

Trio Xolo - "In Flower In Song" 577 Records 2022

Derrick Michaels and Zach Swanson - "Form & Function" 2019

Derrick Michaels Ensemble - "Born From Silence" 2019

Charlie Eron - "Thanks to Give" 2019

Alex Weber - "Wandering Through" 2018

Michaels Weber Kuhl - "Before We Speak" 2017

Talking Points - "Superposition" 2016

Dan Ryan - "Leonard" 2016

Education

Jazz & Commercial Performance, Towson University, Towson, MD

SEPTEMBER 2003 – MAY 2005

High School Diploma, Perry Hall High School, Perry Hall, MD

SEPTEMBER 1999 – MAY 2003