

BRENT I. BIRCKHEAD

PHONE: 443.928.7527 | EMAIL: BIRCK1985@GMAIL.COM | BOOKING: CONTACT@BRENTBIRCKHEAD.COM

SUMMARY

Award-winning woodwind artist and composer with a passion for jazz and contemporary music. Recognized for technical mastery, creative improvisation, and compelling stage presence, hailed as "one of the most riveting young improvisers in New York." Extensive experience performing at esteemed venues such as NPR's Tiny Desk Concert and major global music festivals. Adept at composing and arranging genre-defying music, leading collaborative performances, and fostering transformative musical experiences. Experienced in band leadership and music education, with a dedication to engaging and inspiring diverse audiences.

PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

2015 – Present

BIRCKHEAD

Various Locations

Woodwinds / Band Leader, Composer, Arranger, and Organizer

Notable Performances: *Kennedy Center Honors, Jazz in the Garden* (Headliner), *Blues Alley* (Headliner), *Blues on the Green* (Headliner)

- Released studio albums and live recordings, including the critically acclaimed *BIRCKHEAD* (2018) and *Cacao* (2024), seamlessly blending jazz with R&B, funk, and global musical influences.
- Wrote, arranged, composed, and produced original works celebrated for merging traditional jazz with contemporary and global elements, establishing a unique and innovative voice.
- Headlined and performed at renowned festivals and venues, including the *DC Jazz Festival*, *Monterey Jazz Festival*, *Newport Jazz Festival*, and *Jazz in the Garden* at the National Gallery of Art.
- Featured in prestigious publications such as *The New York Times*, *All About Jazz*, and *CapitalBop* for contributions to the jazz community and technical mastery.
- Recipient of multiple DownBeat Magazine Student Music Awards, including Best Blues/Pop/Rock Soloist and Outstanding Instrumental Jazz Soloist.
- Served as a U.S. cultural ambassador, performing and conducting workshops across seven Caribbean countries through State Department-sponsored programs and led a multicultural ensemble, curating performances that celebrate diversity and highlight global perspectives.

2023-present

American Music Abroad/Arts Envoy

Washington, DC

U.S. Cultural Ambassador

- Appointed as a U.S. Cultural Ambassador, representing the United States internationally and fostering diplomacy through the unifying power of music, culture, community, and mutualism.
- Showcase jazz—often referred to as Black American Classical Music—on a global stage, highlighting its cultural and historical significance through live performances and educational programs in countries such as Suriname, Qatar, Guinea, and Zimbabwe.
- Organize and headline collaborative stage shows with international artists, leveraging expertise in musical direction, live sound engineering, and band leadership to create impactful cross-cultural connections.
- Design and deliver interactive curricula for international students, teaching the technical elements of jazz—including harmonic theory, rhythmic diversity, and ensemble dynamics—while emphasizing its cultural roots and global relevance.
- Conduct workshops and masterclasses on improvisation, ensemble cohesion, and solo performance, mentoring emerging musicians and building artistic capacity worldwide.
- Utilize studio recording and production expertise to document performances and create educational resources, extending the impact of live engagements to digital audiences.
- Advance cultural diplomacy by preserving and promoting the legacy of Black American Classical Music, demonstrating its power to inspire, connect, and bridge cultural divides through a combination of technical mastery, storytelling, and live performance.

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2015–2018

Ms. Lauryn Hill

New York, NY

Woodwind Specialist

Notable Performances: *Grammys, Late Night with Jimmy Fallon, EssenceFest, Black Girls Rock, Austin City Limits, Montreux Jazz Fest*

- Performed as part of Lauryn Hill's touring band, delivering exceptional woodwind performances during international tours across North America, Europe, and Asia.
- Collaborated with a global team of elite musicians to create dynamic, high-energy shows that celebrated cultural diversity and musical excellence.
- Adapted seamlessly to various musical styles and arrangements, showcasing versatility and technical mastery in live performances.
- Contributed to the artistic vision of each performance, blending jazz, R&B, and hip-hop elements to elevate the touring experience for audiences worldwide.
- Supported iconic songs and arrangements with improvisational skills and a deep understanding of ensemble cohesion.

2008-2012

Bohemian Caverns Jazz Orchestra

Washington, DC

Woodwind Specialist

- Performed as lead woodwind specialist in a celebrated ensemble known for its cultural and musical significance in the jazz community.
- Contributed to the development of innovative repertory, blending traditional jazz standards with contemporary compositions to engage diverse audiences.
- Collaborated with accomplished musicians to deliver high-quality performances that upheld the legacy of Bohemian Caverns as a premier jazz venue.
- Played a key role in shaping the ensemble's artistic vision, fostering creativity and excellence in every performance.

ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCES

Gershwin Awards (Performances with Tony Bennett, Gloria Estefan), **Dick Clark New Year's Rockin' Eve** (with DNCE), **Good Morning America** (with Jessie J, DNCE), **NPR: Tiny Desk Concert** (with SWV)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2013-present

Morgan State University

Baltimore, MD

Adjunct Professor

Key Skills: Saxophone Performance, Jazz Theory & Improvisation, Curriculum Development, Ensemble Direction, Mentorship

- Develop and deliver comprehensive curricula covering saxophone technique, improvisation, jazz theory, and ensemble performance, tailored to individual student needs and career aspirations.
- Inspire students to explore the cultural significance of jazz and its roots in Black American Classical Music, cultivating a deeper appreciation for its historical and artistic impact.
- Organize and direct student performances, providing opportunities for practical application and growth in both solo and ensemble settings.
- Contribute to the university's music program by supporting recruitment efforts, maintaining high academic standards, and collaborating with faculty on interdisciplinary projects.

2022-present

Baltimore School for the Arts

Baltimore, MD

Instructor (Saxophone)

Key Skills: Saxophone Performance, Jazz Theory & Improvisation, Curriculum Development, Ensemble Direction, Mentorship

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- Instruct and mentor a diverse group of secondary school students in advanced saxophone performance, focusing on technical mastery, improvisation, and artistic expression.
- Cultivate a global perspective by integrating cultural exchange into the curriculum, emphasizing jazz as a foundation for connecting musical traditions across the world.
- Prepare students for international music careers by developing their stage presence, audition skills, and repertoire versatility.
- Promote the historical and cultural significance of jazz, highlighting its roots as Black American Classical Music and its global impact on contemporary genres.
- Lead students in dynamic solo and ensemble performances, fostering collaboration, confidence, and professional readiness.

2008-2011

Hardy Middle School
Band Director

Washington, DC

- Directed a band program of over 300 students, fostering musical growth, teamwork, and an appreciation for musical traditions by developing and implementing inclusive curricula that celebrated cross-cultural music.
- Organized and led student performances, building confidence and promoting community engagement through music.
- Taught foundational techniques, ensemble dynamics, and performance skills, inspiring students to pursue their musical potential.
- Cultivated strong relationships with parents and the school community, reinforcing the role of music education in personal and cultural development.

AWARDS

- *DownBeat Magazine Student Music Award, Outstanding Instrumental Jazz Soloist (2009, 2010)*
- *DownBeat Magazine Student Music Award, Best Blues/Pop/Rock Soloist (2010)*

EDUCATION

Howard University

Bachelor of Music Education, Magna Cum Laude (2008)
Master of Music in Jazz Studies, Summa Cum Laude (2010)

Washington, DC