

Critically acclaimed saxophonist Darryl Yokley has been recognized as a very talented composer and arranger by The New York Times, Downbeat Magazine, and more. Jazz critic Brent Black described Yokley's playing by saying "Yokley is a critic's worst nightmare as he side steps standard categorization with ease" and Dave Cantor of Downbeat Magazine said of his recent release *Pictures at an African Exhibition* that the young saxophonist was "nakedly shuttling emotion through his instrument." However his music and playing are described, the consensus is that Darryl Yokley is an artist with a unique concept and a sound like no one else.

The son of an African-American father and a first generation Mexican mother, he relishes his diverse background and has developed a love for learning about and embracing the myriad of cultures around the world. Darryl began his musical studies in his native state of California, starting at the age of ten on clarinet and moving to saxophone a year later upon entering middle school. He took quickly to the saxophone and the language of music, placing in honors bands for both classical and jazz. Yokley moved to North Carolina in high school and met his future saxophone professor James Houlik at a clinic in Lenoir, NC. It was in 1997 Yokley decided to focus solely on classical saxophone and it would be ten years before he would truly dedicate himself to jazz. He attended Duquesne University for his undergraduate studies and Michigan State University for graduate studies. He studied with the aforementioned James Houlik and later with concert alto saxophonist Joseph Luloff in Michigan. While Yokley dabbled in jazz studies with Mike Tomaro at Duquesne and Derrick Gardner and Michigan State, the majority of his time and focus was towards being a concert soloist.

After graduating Michigan State University, Darryl started playing and touring with Motown legends the Four Tops, the Temptations, and the O Jays. Yokley was enjoying his time playing with the legendary musicians, but had a desire to swing again and he felt he finally had the time to dedicate himself to jazz and uphold the tradition of learning the music in the streets from older musicians. He moved to Philadelphia in 2007 to complete his "doctoral studies" from mentors such as Tim Warfield, Orrin Evans, Mike Boone, Sid Simmons, Mickey Roker, Edgar Bateman, and Byron Landham playing gigs in Philadelphia and frequenting the jam sessions almost every night. He moved to New York in 2009 and within less than a year started performing with many great artists including Eddie Palmieri, Ralph Peterson Jr, Jack Walrath, Orrin Evans, the Captain Black Big Band, Nasheet Waits, Frank Lacy, Valery Pomonarev's Big Band "Our Father who Art Blakey", Duane Eubanks, Eddie Allen, Camille Gainer Jones III, Thomas Marriott, and others. Yokley has performed for world-renowned musician and producer Quincy Jones as well as being the special guest artist for the closing ceremony for the ARPA International Film Festival in Hollywood 2014. In 2015 he was commissioned to write music for the Philadelphia Museum of Arts exhibition Represent: 200 years of African-American Art. His success has led him to perform around the world including The Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, Madison Square Garden, Wolff Trap, and more. In addition to performing with some of the best names in jazz and Motown, Darryl also performed with Rhonda Ross for two years where he served as saxophonist and arranger in addition to recording with the singer songwriter. He also still maintains an active career as a classical soloist and chamber musician and is currently

playing on Broadway in *Hell's Kitchen*, a musical by acclaimed singer and songwriter, Alicia Keys.

Yokley formed his band Sound Reformation back in 2010 and they released their debut album *The Void* in 2012, which received favorable reviews from such critics as Brent Black and Charles Latimer. The band's popularity has continued to grow after his second album, *Pictures at an African Exhibition*, which has received numerous accolades including the New York Times, Downbeat magazine, All About Jazz, and has led to multiple tours with the band.

Alongside his performance and composing career, Darryl Yokley is an active educator teaching saxophone, flute, and clarinet having students go on to be accepted at the Eastman School of Music as well as perform at Carnegie Hall. He has also served as a guest artist and lecturer at numerous schools including The University of Pennsylvania, and his alma mater, Duquesne University.

Mr. Yokley also currently serves as a creative consultant for Occhi Arts and Entertainment as well as the operations manager of Truth Revolution Recording Collective, where he enjoys taking an active hand in the future of the music industry.

To follow Darryl's performances and other news please visit www.darrylyokley.com, on Instagram @darrylyokleymusic, and he can be found on Twitter and Facebook.