



Anton Schwartz

jazz saxophonist & composer

From Louis Armstrong & Lester Young to Charlie Parker & John Coltrane, jazz's greatest improvisers create music that carries an emotional wallop. It's a lesson that tenor saxophonist Anton Schwartz learned well. Like the giants from whom he draws inspiration, Schwartz approaches jazz as a vehicle for reaching the heart and the head. At a time when many of his contemporaries seem to be making music more for their musical colleagues than a wider audience, Schwartz stands out as a player who communicates with his listeners. Tenor sax legend Illinois Jacquet summed up Schwartz's artistry when he told him, "You play the tenor sax like it's meant to be played."

His latest album, *Flash Mob*, surged to number six on the jazz radio charts and earned a coveted four-star review in *Down Beat* magazine, reinforcing his reputation as a passionate but poised improviser and smart purveyor of well-wrought melodies. Schwartz credits an upbringing immersed in jazz and adventurous popular music with shaping his approach to improvising, which melds irresistible rhythmic momentum with emotionally charged lyricism.

"I feel lucky because the music I grew up on was Earth Wind & Fire, Jimi Hendrix, The Police, Muddy Waters and Steely Dan... as well as Charlie Parker, Stanley Turrentine, John Coltrane, Lennie Tristano and Wes Montgomery," says Schwartz. "I've never really been interested in making music for other musicians. I want to create music that conveys something complex and intriguing—through the rhythm, the structure, the interplay of melody and harmony—and distill all that into something clear and beautiful."

Schwartz comes to his populist sensibility via a heady path. He took the full-time plunge into music relatively late when, at the age of 27, he decided to step away from high-level research in Artificial Intelligence. Since then he's forged ties with some of jazz's heaviest hitters, including pianists Russell Ferrante, Taylor Eigsti, Randy Porter, Josh Nelson, Art Lande and Eric Reed... guitarists Peter Bernstein, Bruce Forman, Ed Cherry and Dan Balmer... Trumpeters Dominick Farinacci, Thomas Marriott and Scott Wendholt... and vocalists Ed Reed, Jackie Ryan, Denise Donatelli and Rebecca Kilgore.

Born in 1967 and raised in New York City amidst a family known for intellectual ferment, Schwartz began playing clarinet at 12 and switched to the saxophone at 14. He found invaluable mentors early on, studying with reed masters Warne Marsh and Eddie Daniels. In high school he had the chance to perform with the likes of Lionel Hampton and Woody Herman.

In college, however, Schwartz pursued other passions. He earned a B.A. in Mathematics and Philosophy at Harvard, graduating *magna cum laude* in 1989. Despite his demanding studies, he played first tenor sax in the Harvard Jazz Band, a chair he held after Don Braden and before Joshua Redman. As a National Science Foundation fellow at Stanford, Schwartz dove into doctoral research in Artificial Intelligence, but after several years he couldn't resist the pull of music, plunging headlong into the Bay Area jazz scene in 1995.

Schwartz relocated to Seattle in 2010, but maintains a strong presence performing and teaching in California. He's a longtime faculty member of the California Jazz Conservatory, where he has designed courses ranging from "The Physics of Musical Sound" to "Improvising Eighth Note Lines." He is also a clinician at the Brubeck Institute, and has been Artist in Residence at Harvard University and the Brubeck Summer Jazz Colony, in addition to numerous jazz festivals and workshops.

A consummate self-starter, he hosts popular loft jazz concerts in Oakland and Seattle in which he performs with masters such as Julian Priester, Ken Peplowski, Taylor Eigsti and Lorraine Feather. He is the author of a popular blog about jazz and music theory and has released five albums on his own Antonjazz label.

Over the past two decades Schwartz has performed at jazz's most prestigious clubs and festivals, from the Blue Note in New York City and Yoshi's in Oakland to Washington D.C.'s Blues Alley and the Monterey Jazz Festival. Recent highlights include two sold-out shows at Jazz at Lincoln Center and a feature as soloist with the Boston Pops in Boston Symphony Hall.

Minding his muse has led Schwartz to verdant musical fields, but he's earned his avid following by heeding E.M. Forster's timeless imperative, "Only connect!...Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted." Marrying probing intelligence to a soulful and celebratory spirit Schwartz meets listeners where they live and takes them on an enthralling journey.

MORE INFORMATION & high-res photos: antonjazz.com.



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