

## BIO

Alex Maksymiw (b. 1979, Toronto, Canada)

I was born in to a musical family. My father is a Conductor and I started musical lessons at the age of 3 on the Cello, which I played until the age of 7, then switching to piano, and played it into my teens. I enjoyed music but it was when I first had the chance to play the guitar at a neighbours house that I felt this is for me. I went through the typical phase of learning music in my room, to performing with local bands in Toronto. After a few years and eventually getting into jazz improvisation, I was lucky enough to get to study with the great Lorne Lofsky, who was my teacher from 1998-2001.

From 2001-2005 I got my BMus at Humber College in Toronto, Canada, where I had the opportunity to study with the best musicians in Canada, such as Don Thompson, who played with Jim Hall's trio, and Pat Labarbara, who was in Elvin Jones' groups. I graduated in 2005 and got a scholarship to study at the Conservatory of Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, studying with the great Jesse Van Ruller. I obtained my MMus in 2008 in Jazz Performance/Composition. During my studies I had the opportunity to perform with Dick Oatts and John Riley while living in Amsterdam.

Upon completion of my formal studies, I began an active performance schedule mostly in

central Europe. From 2008-2010 I played many festivals including Jazz Baltica, Oerol, Amsterdam Jazz Festival, Nic Kultury, Jazz Bez, North Sea Jazz Fest, Toronto Jazz Festival.

At this time, I taught or gave workshops at Uludag University in Bursa, Turkey, Lysenko Conservatory in Lviv, Ukraine and University of Toronto in Toronto, Canada. Also in these two

years I had the chance to perform with such great artists as Michael Bowie and Marcus Strickland, and released my first album 'The Dreamer', and won an award for my playing on

Swiss pop star Heidi Happy's album 'Back Together'.

In 2010 I moved to New York, since, although I wanted to live in Europe, I felt that as a jazz musician, I should spend some time in the place most associated with this great art form. I lived there for 2 years until 2012, performing with many of the cities best musicians. I count this time as somewhat of an informal study, as for me it was just as a concentrated period of learning as was my earlier studies. Notable during this period was a one month tour of the Middle East, performing mostly in the United Arab Emirates, and somewhat in Muscat, Oman.

I moved to Berlin, Germany in the summer of 2013, and it has been my residence since. I released my second album as a leader 'Without a Word' (Double Moon Records), in 2015, which features the great Marcus Strickland. I also performed as part of a Duo with saxophonist Peter Van Huffell and we recorded our album 'Kronix' for the prestigious Fresh Sound label, which was released in 2016. In 2017, with the help of Canadian Council for the Arts, I studied with the great composer Sergei Newski, and composed music for a Septet featuring two vocalists, cello, clarinet, drums, trombone, and guitar. After a successful tour in Ukraine, we made a record, which was in fact released in 2022.

From 2018 until the Covid crisis, I had the pleasure of recording and touring with some of the best musicians including Peter Schlamb, Sam Harris, Logan Richardson and Doug Weiss. In 2019 I took a jazz residency with a Berlin based band, and went to China to perform for half a year at JZ jazz club. During the Covid crisis, I released new music, the latest being Chromatic games, which I put out in 2022.

I feel very fortunate to be able to play music for a living, since my love for this art form has not in any way changed since I first started. It is a never ending process of sharing, growth, challenge, patience, and dedication, and it is ever present.