

Johnathan Blake

“Johnathan Blake is without peer among young drummers for clarity of his beat and incisiveness of his swing.” – Brian Lynch

Grammy-nominated drummer and composer, Johnathan Blake, has been working steadily in the contemporary jazz scene for the past 10 years. He has been a first-call drummer for many notable jazz musicians such as Roy Hargrove, David Sanchez, Randy Brecker, and Oliver Lake to name a few. His musicianship, professionalism, and positive attitude are few of the attributes that make him the choice drummer for many. In addition to being a sideman, Johnathan recently began touring as a leader.

Johnathan Blake was born in Philadelphia on July 1st, 1976 as a son of a world-renown jazz violinist, John Blake, Jr. Naturally, from early on, his father introduced Johnathan to the world of jazz music. Although, Johnathan began playing violin at the age of three under his father's guidance, he never felt at home with the instrument. He always felt a close connection to the drums in spite of his father's wish.

When Johnathan was 10 years old, a visiting music teacher at his elementary school gave him a choice of instrument after Johnathan scored perfect on the music aptitude test. Without hesitation, Johnathan picked the drum set. He started taking lessons at the school and it became clear to everyone very quickly that the drums, indeed, was his calling.

In middle school, Johnathan performed with the jazz band for the first time. He won several awards including Outstanding Achievement Award in Music. Beginning at age 12, Johnathan was involved with the Lovett Hines Youth Ensemble, where he met his long-time friend and musical partner, Jaleel Shaw. With the Lovett Hines Youth Ensemble, Johnathan performed regularly in the Philadelphia area.

Johnathan went on to George Washington High School in Philadelphia, where he was a drum captain of the marching band and started playing with Settlement Music School under the direction of Robert Landham. During the summer time, he participated in many music camps such as Jazz Opportunity for Youth at Montclair State College, Jazz in July Summer Workshop at the University of Massachusetts.

As Johnathan became more involved in music, he began contemplating a career as professional jazz musician seriously. His encounter with *Love Supreme* was a big turning point for him in making the decision.

Johnathan went on to William Paterson University to pursue his jazz studies further. He studied with Rufus Reid, John Riley, Steve Wilson, and Horace Arnold. While in school, he started working professionally with the Oliver Lake Big Band, Roy Hargrove, and David Sanchez. When McCoy Tyner asked Johnathan to join his group, he pondered leaving school for good to pursue his professional career; however, Johnathan decided to complete his education as it is of utmost importance to him.

Since completing his degree at William Paterson University, Johnathan has been enjoying a busy schedule as a profession musician. He has performed, toured, and recorded with Clark Terry, Slide Hampton, Stanley Turrentine, McCoy Tyner, the Mingus Big Band, Steps Ahead, Bob Berg, Christian McBride, Stanley Clark, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Shirley Scott, and John Scofield among others. In addition to his successful career as a sideman, Johnathan began leading his own group locally and internationally.

He currently performs with Kenny Barron, Tom Harrell, and Russell Malone among others. Also an accomplished composer, Johnathan has earned his Master's degree from Rutgers University and was a recipient of ASCAP Young Jazz Composers' Award. Johnathan can be heard on numerous recordings including *Prana Dance* by Tom Harrell. Further, is planning his debut CD.

For more information, visit www.cami.com.