

Samuel L. Blakeslee

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EDUCATION

University of Akron, Akron, OH, Aug. 2011 - May 2013 Masters in Brass Performance

Youngstown State University, Youngstown, OH, Aug. 2007- Jun. 2011 Bachelor of Music in Jazz Studies, Magna Cum Laude

CREATIVE ACTIVITY

SAM BLAKESLEE'S WISTFUL THINKING, Mar. 2020 - Present

- Recorded *Wistful Thinking - Part I: Acoustic, Part II: Electric*, a new chamber ensemble and upcoming 16-track double album featuring Sam Blakeslee (compositions/programming/trombone) Chris Coles (alto saxophone/pedals) Brandon Coleman (guitar/pedals/programming), Matt Wiles (bass/pedals)
- Features special guests Dan Pugach (drums), Brian Krock (alto flute/bass clarinet), and percussion master Jamey Haddad
- Will be released Spring/Summer 2021

SAM BLAKESLEE QUINTET, Feb. 2016-Present

- The Sam Blakeslee Quintet released its debut recording in October 2017 that featured original compositions as well as Brandon Coleman (guitar), Jorn Swart (piano), Cory Todd (bass), and Dan Pugach (drums)
- The self-released album received glowing critical acclaim from jazz publications

- such as All About Jazz, Jazz Corner, Textura, and No Depression
- The Sam Blakeslee Quintet has performed at the following venues on national
- tours: Bop Stop (Cleveland, OH), Blu Jazz (Akron, OH), Club Bonafide (NYC), Whynot Jazz Room (NYC), The Rhythm Room (Los Angeles, CA) Merrimans Playhouse (South Bend, IN), Tri-C JazzFest (Cleveland, OH), Rubber City Jazz Festival (Akron, OH), The Golden Mean (Cincinnati), Oberlin College, Youngstown State University, Fulton Street Collective (Chicago, IL), Nighttown (Cleveland, OH), James Street Tavern, (Pittsburgh, PA).

SAM BLAKESLEE LARGE GROUP, Oct. 2013 - present

- Leads a contemporary jazz orchestra comprised of some of New York City's most dynamic and creative musicians
- The repertoire consists of all original compositions and arrangements and pulls on a multitude of styles and genres
- From Jan. 2016 - July 2017, the Large Group held a monthly residency at Blu Jazz in Akron, OH which was recently ranked on *Downbeat Magazine's* "Top 100 Jazz Clubs"
- The residency featured collaborations with the Grammy-Nominated Nicole Zuraitis and Dan Pugach, Dominick Farinacci, David Smith, and the renowned composer and educator Bill Dobbins
- *Sam Blakeslee Large Group: Live at Blu Jazz* was released exclusively on Bandcamp in October 2018 and a live compilation of all original compositions from the residency

FREELANCE TROMBONIST, Aug. 2017 - present

New York, NY

- Has performed at esteemed jazz venues such as The 55 Bar, Smalls, Birdland, The Jazz Gallery, The Blue Note, Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center, The Banff Centre as well as jazz festivals such as Stowe Jazz Festival (VT), Branford Jazz Festival (CT), Rubber City Jazz and Blues Festival (OH), Tri-C JazzFest (OH), The Jazz Estate (Milwaukee, WI), Parma Jazz Festival (Italy), Mosciano San Angelo Jazz Festival (Italy), Fano Jazz Festival (Italy), Deutsche Musikfest (Chemnitz, Germany), Bird's Eye Jazz Club (Basel, Switzerland)
- Performs regularly with Brian Krock's Big Heart Machine, Manuel Valera's New Cuban Express Big Band, as well as Grammy-Nominated/Winning ensembles Terraza Big Band, Dan Pugach Nonet, Emlio Solla's Tango Jazz Orchestra, and Afro-Bop Alliance Big Band

- Has also performed with jazz artists such as Joe Lovano, Sean Jones, Ingrid Jensen, Dan Wilson, Dick Oatts, Dennis Mackrel, Aretha Franklin, Bobby Sanabria, Jiggs Whigham, Dominick Farinacci, The Cleveland Jazz Orchestra, Wess Anderson
- Is currently an endorsing artist for Best American Craftsmen Custom Trombones (B.A.C.) in Kansas City, MO

FREELANCE COMPOSER, Aug. 2012 - present

- Was awarded the inaugural 2018 David Baker Prize in Composition from Ravinia Steans Music Institute for *Slow Growth/New Growth* (string quartet, piano, bass, drums) in *Bridges: An International Classical & Jazz Fusion Competition*. The piece premiered on June 9th, 2018 in Martin Theater at Ravinia with the Avalon String Quartet, Billy Test (piano), Ilya DaCosta (bass), and Clif Wallace (drums). The piece was performed alongside works by RSMI co-directors Rufus Reid, Billy Childs. In June 2019, Blakeslee was asked back to serve as a *Bridges* Composer-in-Residence to have his piece performed again at Ravinia Festival
- Has had works performed and commissioned by the International Society of Jazz Composers and Arrangers (ISJAC), Cleveland Jazz Orchestra, Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra, Youngstown State University, Oberlin College, Mount San Antonio College Tri-C JazzFest, and University of Akron
- Was awarded “Honorable Mention” in New York Youth Symphony’s 2019 First Music Jazz Commission Contest
- Was a featured composer for The Jazz Gallery’s Jazz Composer Showcase curated by Miho Hazama in February 2020
- Was awarded a COVID-19 Commission Grant from International Society of Jazz Composers and Arrangers in May 2020

DISCOGRAPHY, Mar 2015 - Present

(* for albums recorded, but are not yet released)

- Paul Ferguson Ensemble, *Encounter* (2015)
- Cleveland Jazz Orchestra, *Live In Cleveland* (2017)
- Anthony Taddeo, *Self Portraits* (2017)
- Sam Blakeslee Quintet, *Selective Coverage* (2017)
- Dan Wilson, *Balancing Act* (2017)
- Sam Blakeslee Large Group, *Live at Blu Jazz* (2018)
- Dave Morgan, *Blue is More Than A Color* (2018)
- New York Afro-Bop Alliance Big Band, *Upwards* (2019)

- Big Heart Machine, *Live at The Jazz Gallery* (2020)
- Chris Coles, *Nine Lives Project** (2019)
- Tommy Lehman, *Live at Blu Jazz* (2020)
- Sam Blakeslee, *Wistful Thinking, Part I: Acoustic, Part II: Electric** (2020)
- Sam Blakeslee Large Group, *Another Day In Which To Excel** - single (2020)
- Manuel Valera, *New Cuban Express Big Band* (2020)*

WORKSHOPS ATTENDED, Jun 2010 - present

BMI Jazz Composer Workshop, Sep 2020 - present

- Currently a member of the weekly workshop for jazz composers under the direction of Andy Farber and Alan Ferber
- Since September 2020, has brought in 6 new pieces for the bi-monthly reading sessions for ensemble/peer review

The Banff Centre International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music,

May - Jun. 2014.

- Took part in rigorous masterclasses, ensemble rehearsals, and lectures with some of the most influential names in contemporary improvised music including Vijay Iyer, Steve Coleman, Aruna Sairam, Ambrose Akinmusire, Steve Lehman Tyshawn Sorey, Jen Shyu and Marcus Gilmore
- Performed original music in multiple venues at the Banff Centre including The Club and the Harvey Mason Theatre
- Recorded with the workshop's Conduction Ensemble as well as original music at the Luscar Recording Studio at the Banff Centre

Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead Residency at The Kennedy Center, Apr. 2011

- Was selected to be one of 25 applicants into the esteemed two week jazz residency
- Performed original music to a worldwide audience at the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center, as well as tours in surrounding areas
- Had the opportunity to study with Curtis Fuller, George Cables, Dr. Nathan Davis, and Winard Harper

Ravinia Steans Music Institute, Jun. 2009

- Was selected by the bassist Rufus Reid to attend the renowned week long residency in Ravinia, IL to perform original compositions and attend masterclasses in improvisation, composition, and the business of music

PROFESSIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Freelance Educator/Clinician, Aug 2017-present

- Has taught extensive private lessons in trombone, composition, and arranging lessons, both in in-person and online settings
- Has given clinics/masterclasses at Cuyahoga Community College (Cleveland, OH), Youngstown State University (Youngstown, OH), Kent State University (Kent, OH), Jazz Arts Group (Columbus, OH), Boys and Girls Club of Cleveland, Open Tone Music (Cleveland, OH)

Director, Jazz Prep and After-School Band Program

Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland OH May 2015 - June 2017

- Built a new structure, created new curriculum, and hired new faculty for reboot of middle and high school jazz programming in 2015
- managed a team of 5 teachers for the Jazz Prep Program, was in charge of curriculum development, community performances, and Tri-C JazzFest Summer Camp
- managed a team of 3 teachers at three teaching sites for the After School Band Program in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Adjunct Faculty, Aug. 2014 - May 2017

Cleveland Institute of Music, Cleveland OH - Instructor of Improvisation

- Taught courses in Improvisation for classical musicians and also directed the Improvisation Ensemble. Topics included jazz repertoire, free improvisation, improvising using graphic scores, as well as emulating works of composers

Adjunct Faculty, Jan. 2014- May 2017

Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland OH
Instructor of Jazz Trombone, Improvisation, and Composition

Adjunct Faculty, Aug. 2013 - May 2013

Youngstown State University, Youngstown OH

- Instructor of Jazz Trombone, director of Jazz Combos and Jazz Ensemble 3
- Performed and led a masterclass in jazz techniques at the 2014 Youngstown State University Trombone Day

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Aug. 2011 - May 2013

The University of Akron, Akron OH

- Served as an instructor for an undergraduate Jazz Combo
- Composed original music and arrangements for both The University of Akron Jazz Ensemble as well as the The University of Akron Jazz Trombone Group
- Performed in The University of Akron Symphony Orchestra, Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Trombone Choir, Jazz Ensemble, Jazz Trombone Group, Jazz Combo, and numerous chamber groups.
- Presented seminars on jazz improvisation and approaching improvisation on the alto trombone
- In February 2014, The University of Akron Jazz Trombone Group won first place in the International Trombone Association's Kai Winding Jazz Trombone Ensemble Competition and had a chance to perform at the International Trombone Festival in Columbus, GA in June
- Performed with the University of Akron Jazz Trombone Group at one of the largest German music festivals in Chemnitz, Germany
- performed the world premier of David Gillingham's "Nights In Tobago" at the 2012 OCMEA Convention in Columbus, OH.
- Performed with the University of Akron Jazz Ensemble alongside with Michael Spiro, Nestor Torres, and Ken Peplowski, both in student and faculty ensembles

GRANTS AWARDED

- Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation COVID-19 Jazz Musician Relief Grants, April 2020, \$1000
- International Society of Jazz Composers and Arrangers COVID-19 Commission Grant, May 2020, \$500

WORK IN DEVELOPMENT

- International Society of Jazz Composers and Arrangers COVID-19 Commission Grant, May 2020. Work on the piece will be starting in May 2020 and will be written for contemporary jazz orchestra
- Master recordings for *Another Day In Which To Excel*, the subsequent commission from International Society of Jazz Composers and Arrangers has been completed and is now in negotiation phases with record labels
- Master recordings for *Wistful Thinking I & II*, have been completed and is now in negotiation phases with record labels

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2018 recipient of the David Baker Prize in Composition from Ravinia Steans Music Institute
- *Bridges* Composer-in Residence at Ravinia Steans Music Institute 2018-19
- Honorable Mention in New York Youth Symphony's First Music Jazz Commission Contest
- Nominated for the Cleveland Arts Prize in Music, February 2015
- Tuesday Musical Scholarship in Brass, Mar. 2013
- 1st place in the 2013 International Trombone Association Kai Winding Jazz Trombone Ensemble Competition

PRINCIPAL TEACHERS

Classical Trombone

- Mr. Edward Zadrozny
- Dr. Michael Crist

Jazz Trombone/Improvisation

- Dr. David Morgan
- Mr. Jack Schantz
- Mr. Chris Anderson

Composition/Arranging

- Mr. Alan Ferber
- Dr. David Morgan
- Mr. Andy Farber

MASTERCLASSES/PRIVATE LESSONS with

- Slide Hampton, Herbie Hancock, Elliot Mason, Curtis Fuller, Alan Ferber, Andy Farber, Ambrose Akinmusire, Steve Coleman, Vijay Iyer, Marcus Gilmore, Tyshawn Sorey, Michael Dease, Jiggs Whigham, Steve Lehman, Rufus Reid, Steve Wilson, Billy Childs

REFERENCES

Mr. Rufus Reid, Composer/Bassist/Professor Emeritus William Paterson University
Email: rufusreid@gmail.com

Ms. Miho Hazama, Chief Conductor - *Danish Radio Big Band* / Composer-in-Residence
Siena Wind Orchestra
Cell: 917-769-2215
Email: miho.h.music@mac.com

Mr. Michael Thomas, Composer/Bandleader - *Terraza Big Band*
Email: mtsaxguy@gmail.com
Cell: 352-316-3861

Dr. David Morgan, Associate Professor of Jazz Studies and String Bass at Youngstown State University
Cell: 216 - 210 - 2316
E-Mail: dsmorgan@ysu.edu

Mrs. Emanuela Friscioni, Director of Creative Arts Academy at Cuyahoga Community College
Cell: 216-987-2060
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Mr. Jack Schantz, Coordinator of Jazz Studies at the University of Akron
Cell: 330 - 860 - 3518
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Mr. Edward Zadrozny, Trombone Professor Emeritus at the University of Akron
Cell: 330 - 802 - 6144
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