

ALISON SHEARER

Called “a force on the rise” by *JazzTimes* magazine, Alison Shearer’s explosive career hits refresh on what it means to be a jazz saxophonist today. With classical technique and legendary jazz mentorship undergirding a raw, natural talent, Alison synthesizes the many disparate influences crowding our listening landscape into a style at once personal and global. She leads a new generation of performers, inhabiting her individuality as a member of an international artistic community, and reconfiguring the identity of “jazz fusion” for our current moment.

Alison gathered her eponymous Quartet, with Kevin Bernstein, keys, Marty Kenney, bass, and Horace Phillips, drums, in 2015. She writes most of the group’s music, and their soulful, groovy, melodic take on fusion found immediate acclaim in New York City, where the group got its start. The ensemble held a year-long residency at the Williamsburg Hotel in 2018, played venues across the city including Joe’s Pub and Rockwood Music Hall, and collaborated with a diverse array of artists, including Jonathan Hoard, Melissa McMillan, Sami Stevens, Sammy Rae, JSWISS, Rabbi Darkside and Sirintip.

In 2010, Alison co-founded PitchBlak Brass Band along with a cross-disciplinary cohort of fellow MSM students. Raved about by *DownBeat* and *The Source* magazines, NPR, Live for Live Music, and *The Wall Street Journal*, PitchBlak blossomed from a love for New Orleans second line, combining traditional southern brass with the modern forms it inspired: blues, jazz, and hip hop. Its synthesis of the traditional and the modern sold out prestigious venues, including the Brooklyn Bowl, the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, and the Blue Note.

Alison has also spent years refining her chameleonic sound, blending with a wide variety of eclectic and essential artists, like Kurt Elling, Nate Smith, Charlie Hunter, Big Daddy Kane, and Pharoahe Monch. Recent collaborations include indie-folk singer-songwriter Anna Egge, and drummer Sunny Jain, whose psychedelic bhangra band Red Baraat NPR called “the best party band in years.”

All these influences came to bear on Alison’s debut solo album, ‘View From Above,’ which was released to fanfare in 2022. The album, for which Alison wrote all ten tracks, features ASQ with a bevy of collaborators. Its soaring blend of jazz, funk, and soul (with a dash of pop exuberance) belies the tragedy that birthed its ecstatic expression of individuality: the loss of her father John Shearer, pioneering civil rights-era photojournalist, to cancer in 2019.

Alison and her father connected through art, and his burning desire to create was an inspiration for both her personal voice, and the album. Though steeped in the tragedy of loss, the album is ultimately redemptive, a testament to the learning and love change makes possible. ‘View From Above’ was a *JazzTimes* Editor’s Choice, and one of NPR’s Jazz Night in America’s Top Ten Albums of 2022.

Alison is a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, where she studied with jazz sax greats Dick Oatts, Steve Wilson, and Vincent Herring. She has toured extensively throughout the United States, Canada, and South Asia, appearing at notable festivals like the San Francisco, Saratoga, and Rochester Jazz Festivals, Music Mela, Moab Music Festival, and Dubai Expo 2020; and venues like the Kaufman Music Center, Brooklyn Bowl, and Wolf Trap, among many others.

Upcoming appearances include engagements with ASQ in Ojai, Paso Robles, Ventura, and Los Angeles, CA.; a February duo show at The Capa Space in Yorktown Heights, NY, alongside an exhibition of her late father’s prints; and a march tour with Red Baraat.

Alison is also currently at work on her very first chamber work for the classical stage. The new piece, commissioned by pianist Andrew Armstrong and the University of South Carolina Beaufort is a septet for piano, strings, and alto saxophone, and will premiere in April in South Carolina, before heading north to New Canaan, CT.

Alison is a passionate teacher and has maintained a private studio for 15 years. She recently joined the faculty of Jazz House Kids, where her work with young students fosters community building through jazz education.

Alison is an endorsing artist with D'Addario Reeds.



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