

JONATHAN SARAGA

Trumpeter | Flugelhornist | Composer | Arranger | Educator | Producer | Transcriber | Copyist
B.M.\M.M.\D.M.A. | www.jonathansaraga.com | jonathan@jonathansaraga.com | (347) 574-2003



Manhattan, NYC native, trumpeter and composer Jonathan Saraga has been said by All About Jazz to possess the musical “wisdom and maturity of veterans more than twice his age,” and that “his chops, lust for musical life and don't-box-me-into-a-stylistic-corner mentality make him seem like the musical offspring of trumpeters Dave Douglas and Ambrose Akinmusire.”

A few years after receiving the Fred Mazart Music Award in 2005 as he began his collegiate studies, Jonathan won the 2007 International Trumpet Guild Jazz Solo Competition. Shortly after receiving his Bachelor of Music degree, he competed again, this time as one of five finalists in the 2009 Carmine Caruso International Jazz Trumpet Competition. After obtaining his Master of Music degree in 2011, Jonathan was among two trumpeters selected from an international pool to participate in the 2011 School for Improvisational Music summer intensive program. That same year, he self-released his debut album, *First Vision*, which All About Jazz deemed “a skillfully conceived and exquisitely realized debut that brings to mind the edgy, envelope-pushing hard bop of many a Blue Note record in the early 1960s.” They even hailed it as a “stand up and take notice musical offering,” and spoke of its “rare blend of individuality and maturity.” World-renowned trumpeter Jim Rotondi deemed Jonathan's playing on the album as “unique” and “inventive”, and said that it breathes “soul, intelligence, great technique and acute musical awareness.” In 2014, it was re-released on the Blue Truffle Music record label.

That same year, after touring the U.S. with an off-Broadway production of *Damn Yankees*, and after working as lead and solo trumpeter for Princess cruise lines, Jonathan was awarded an audition for the Artist Diploma program at Juilliard in, having been one of only two trumpeters even considered. A year later, in 2015, he was one of only five trumpeters invited to participate in the Banff Summer Intensive Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music in Alberta, Canada, and in 2016, received an ASCAP Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award for his composition, “Uprising”, featured on his second album, *Journey to a New World* (Fresh Sound Records/2017).

Jonathan's sophomore release which has been called “inventive” and “assertive” by *JazzWise*, (U.K.) has also been said to feature “astonishing maturity” (*Jazz Magazine*, France), “a deft compositional approach and some first-rate musicianship” (*All About Jazz*, U.S.). The Saraga-penned original compositions also received a total of 4 semi-finalist nominations and 1 finalist/Honorable Mention nominations in the 2016 and 2017 International Songwriting Competitions, the latter award being received by only 1% of the original 16,000+ entries from 140 countries. The album has aired on radio stations around the world, and has been featured on Kansas Public Radio's Top 10 Jazz CD list 2 weeks in a row, amongst albums by Esperanza Spaulding, Dr. Lonnie Smith, and Christian McBride. Jonathan's release has also received three 4-star reviews in *JazzWise* (U.K) and *All About Jazz* (U.S.) as well as a interview with jazz author, Ruth Fischer.

Since 2006, Saraga has appeared on nearly 30 albums as a sideman, and has performed throughout Europe, Asia, the Caribbean and across the U.S. as a leader and in ensembles led by highly acclaimed artists such as Steve Coleman, Henry Cole, Maria Schneider, The Mingus Big Band, Remy Le Boeuf, Darcy James Argue, Orrin Evans, Jihye Lee, Migiwa Miyajima, Jason Marshall, Manuel Valera, Josh Evans, Jimmy Greene, Tyshawn Sorey, Eric Bergen and the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra to name a few. He's performed as a sideman not only at renowned NYC-venues such as Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space, the Barclay's Center, Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, Rockefeller Center, the Blue Note, Joe's Pub, Birdland, and the Jazz Standard, but also at The Putra World Tower in Malaysia, and at many venues throughout Europe, Haiti/the Caribbean, and Canada. As a leader, Jonathan has not only performed his original music at iconic NYC-venues such as Seeds, Cornelia St. Café, The Bar Next Door, Jazz at the Kitano, Shapeshifter Lab and Smalls Jazz Club, but he's also headlined the first ever Caribbean International Jazz Fest in Les Cayes, Haiti, and has recorded on nearly 30 albums.

As he continues onward along the path of a performing artist, Jonathan also makes time to coach aspiring musicians. In addition to continuing his service as an educator at the Gramercy Brass Band Camp, going on 7 years, Jonathan leads multi-instrument ensembles and group trumpet classes at public schools throughout the five boroughs as part of the Afro-Latin Jazz Academy, The Gramercy Brass Orchestra of New York, New York Ensemble Classes, the Lyceum Kennedy International School, Jubilee Enrichment Programs, Jazz Empowers and The New York Jazz Academy. He has served as full-time after-school music teacher at the Lyceum Kennedy French/Japanese School and most recently has finished 6 semesters of service as a Graduate Part-Time Instructor at the University of Colorado, Boulder, which included 3 semesters of ensemble coaching/conducting as well as 3 semesters of 100+ student History of Jazz lecture classes for non-majors. In addition to completing his D.M.A. in May of 2019, the recently hooded Dr. Saraga was accepted to the 2019 Early Fall Musicians in Residence program at the Banff Center, and achieved finalist status in the 2019 New Jazz Works grant presented by Chamber Music America. In 2020 he was one of three trumpeters to make it to the final round of auditions for the GRAMMY-winning Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra's 4th Trumpet Chair, and was selected to present at the International Society for Improvised Music conference (Melbourne Conservatorium of Music-Melbourne, Australia) and the Association for Popular Music Education (APME) conference (Edinburgh Napier University-Edinburgh, Scotland).

Jonathan holds 3 degrees in Jazz Studies/Trumpet Performance: Bachelor of Music, Master of Music, and Doctor of Musical Arts.