

MICHAEL TRACY

SAXOPHONIST/EDUCATOR

A veritable "Ambassador of Jazz," Professor Michael Tracy is one of America's foremost jazz educators, with more than fifty years of performing and teaching experience. In classrooms, studios, and concert halls, he has developed a variety of innovative approaches to jazz education, enabling him to work with students of any proficiency. Tracy has taught and performed throughout the United States, Argentina, Australia, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Kenya, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, Republic of Georgia, Russia, Scotland, Singapore, and Wales. As a Fulbright Senior Specialist, he worked with and advised the jazz programs at the Estonian Music Academy in Tallinn, Estonia (2004), the Tbilisi State Conservatoire in Tbilisi, Georgia (2016), Universidad de las Américas in Quito, Ecuador (2018-19) and Ghetto Classics in Nairobi, Kenya (2024).

International outreach is a major component of Professor Tracy's activities. They include coordinating and hosting groups sponsored by the Open World Cultural Program, an organization that brought jazz musicians from Russia to the United States to interact with their American counterparts. In turn, he took jazz ensembles from the University of Louisville to perform at jazz festivals in numerous Russian locations. As coordinator for a FIPSE/CAPES grant, Tracy was responsible for organizing and overseeing student exchanges between the University of Louisville, the Universidade de Brasília and Universidade Estadual de Campinas. He also worked with CEC ArtsLink, helping to provide artists from the Republic of Georgia and the Ukraine opportunities to experience jazz in America. Tracy has also been instrumental in establishing faculty and student exchanges and workshops with institutions in Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Japan, Poland, Republic of Georgia and Russia.

Mr. Tracy established the Jazz Studies Program at the University of Louisville School of Music in 1985, which grew to become recognized throughout the nation and world for its attention to quality and innovative programs. Tracy coordinated and helped to develop a Bachelor of Music with an Emphasis in Jazz Performance, Bachelor of Music Education with a Jazz Track, Bachelor of Music with an Emphasis in Music Therapy with an optional Concentration in Jazz, and a Bachelor of Arts with Emphasis in Jazz Studies degrees in addition to Master of Music with a Concentration in Jazz Performance and Master of Music with a Concentration in Jazz Composition and Arranging degrees.

Asked to produce an annual jazz festival, Mr. Tracy created Jazz Week (currently Jazz Fest), an exciting multi-day celebration of jazz with concerts, workshops, clinics, and adjudication. Jazz Week/Fest, founded in 1994, featured Jazz Masters including Dave Brubeck, Winton Marsalis, Elvin Jones, McCoy Tyner, Marian McPartland, Paquito D'Rivera, Michael Brecker, Christian McBride, Clark Terry, The Heath Brothers, Ahmad Jamal, John Hendricks, Toot Thielemans, Lou Donaldson, Roy Haynes, Slide Hampton and many more.

Fund raising for specifically jazz activities were activities where Mr. Tracy also excelled. Through his stewardship, the Visiting Jazz Artist Endowment and the Max Baumgardner Endowment to enhance student support and artistic activities were established in excess of \$10,000,000.

As the retired Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Louisville School of Music in Louisville, Kentucky (formally the Jamey Aebersold Jazz Studied Program from 2000 to 2022), Professor Tracy taught jazz saxophone, jazz repertoire and numerous ensembles.

In addition to his duties at the University, he was a longtime faculty member of the world-renowned Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshops, where he served for over forty-two years. Each summer he taught combo, jazz theory, and saxophone master classes with the world's leading jazz educators and as camp administrator was responsible for organizing and coordinating all educational programs and activities. In 1980, he founded the Louisville Jazz Workshop to offer high and middle school students the opportunity to experience improvisation and jazz performance. The Louisville Jazz Workshop is now a summer jazz workshop experience for adults, where he is the director.

In the summer of 2020, Tracy helped to organize and develop an online jazz education site, JazzAnywhere.com, which offers a variety of courses on jazz, Brazilian and Colombian music. In addition, Mr. Tracy is actively involved presenting online master classes for organizations in Brazil (Festival Internacional de Música em Casa), Colombia (Universidad el Bosque), Ecuador (Universidad de las Artes) and Russia (US Embassy and What a Wonderful World Jazz Festival) and more.

Tracy's dedication to jazz education has not gone unnoticed. He is the recipient of several awards including recognition as a 2014 University of Louisville Alumni Fellow, the 2000 University of Louisville Distinguished Faculty Service Award, the 1999 Red Apple Award, and the 1996 School of Music Alumni Service Award. He is also a two-time National Endowment for the Arts Award winner and is a member of the 2000 Who's Who in Executives and Professionals and 2005 Who's Who Among America's Teachers. In 2021, he recognized by the Latin Music Awards Kentucky, receiving the "Award for Outstanding Leadership and Outstanding Contributions to our Latino music community in Kentucky". October 8, 2017 was proclaimed Mike Tracy Day in Louisville "For his tireless endeavors to inspire jazz fans and musicians throughout the world."

Although education has been the main focus of his career, Tracy has also made forays into the worlds of recording, publishing, and arranging. He has eight CDs to his credit. The most recent effort, **Fotografia** (2019) is a collection of Brazilian standards, originals and even popular favorites. Following the release of *Fotografia*, he and his group *Hora Certa* were recognized as the Best Latin Jazz Artist of 2019 by Latin Music Awards Kentucky.

Other recordings include **Hora Certa** (2016), a collection of new compositions performed by an all-Brazilian rhythm section and recorded in Brazil. **Surfboard** (2012, Summit Records: DCD 593) also features an all-Brazilian rhythm section (Renato Vasconcellos, Leonardo Cioglia and Vanderlei Pereira) performing Brazilian selections by Jobim, Pascoal and others in addition to new originals written specially for the CD by contemporary Brazilian composers. **Wingspan** (2010, SeaBreeze: SBJ-3092), features Italian pianist Davide Logiri and showcases originals and arrangements of jazz standards. **Conversations** (2008, SeaBreeze: SBJ-3088), is a collection of duets with pianist Harry Pickens. **Gusting** (2004, SeaBreeze: SB-3071) offers a variety of contemporary compositions and was preceded by **Tracings** (2003, SeaBreeze: SB-3062), which includes originals and Brazilian standards and arrangements. **Facets**, released in 1999, features the saxophone in a variety of previously unrecorded classical and jazz works from composers with ties to the state of Kentucky.

Tracy's publishing accomplishments include authoring the books **Jazz Piano Voicings for the Non-pianist** and **Jazz Saxophone Survey: A Descriptive Analysis of 38 Saxophonists**, and co-authoring **Pocket Changes: 421 Standard Chord Progressions** and **Pocket Changes II: 381 Standard Chord Progressions**. As an arranger, he has been featured on PBS television and National Public Radio, where his re-scoring of Kurt Weill's Threepenny Opera for twenty-piece saxophone orchestra was broadcast.

Professor Tracy holds a Master of Arts in Higher Education and Bachelor of Music and Music Education degrees from the University of Louisville. He is also the recipient of two National Endowment for the Arts Study Grants in jazz performance. Among his teachers are internationally prominent jazz musicians including Jamey Aebersold, David Liebman, Jerry Coker, and David Baker. He has shared the stage with such stars as Ella Fitzgerald, Buddy Rich, J. J. Johnson, Curtis Fuller, Johnny Mathis, Marvin Hamlisch, the Four Tops and the Temptations. He has also teamed up with jazz greats Jamey Aebersold, David Liebman, Rufus Reid, David Baker, Bobby Shew, Jerry Coker, Dan Haerle, Pat La Barbera and others for concerts and club appearances around the world. Additionally, Tracy has performed and recorded with the Louisville Orchestra in both classical and pop settings and was an Artist-in-Residence for the Kentucky Arts Council from 1980 until 1988.

Michael Tracy is a Yamaha Artist, D'Addario Artist (playing exclusively on D'Addario Jazz Select Reeds) and a Friend of Bambú (ligature). For additional information please visit www.michaeltracy.com.