

Darryl Yokley is a uniquely gifted artist with a vast array of skills at his disposal. Not only is he an accomplished saxophonist, but he is also recognized as a very talented composer and arranger, writing unforgettable tunes for his own band Sound Reformation as well as arranging music for artists such as Orrin Evans and the Captain Black Big Band, Rhonda Ross, Michigan State University Jazz ensemble, and more. Some people have characterized his playing and writing, as “different”, “unique”, “adventurous”, “special”, or saying that Yokley has “his own thing.” Brent Black describes Yokley playing by saying “Yokley is a critic’s worst nightmare as he side steps standard categorization with ease.” However his music is described, the consensus is that Darryl Yokley is an artist with a concept and vision, and a sound that sounds like no one else.

Yokley began his musical studies in his native state of California, starting at the age of ten on clarinet and moving to saxophone a year later upon entering middle school. He took quickly to the saxophone and the language of music, placing in honors bands for both classical and jazz. Yokley moved to North Carolina in high school and met his future saxophone professor James Houlik at a clinic in Lenoir, NC. It was then in 1997 that Yokley decided to focus solely on classical saxophone and it would be ten years before Yokley truly dedicated himself to jazz. He attended Duquesne University for his undergraduate studies and Michigan State University for graduate studies. He studied with the aforementioned James Houlik and then later concert alto saxophonist Joseph Luloff in Michigan, practicing constantly and perfecting his skills on the instrument. While Yokley dabbled in jazz studies with Mike Tomaro at Duquesne and Derrick Gardner and Michigan State, a vast majority of his time and focus was towards being a concert soloist.

After graduating Michigan State University, Yokley started playing and touring with Motown legends the Four Tops, the Temptations, and the O Jays. Yokley was enjoying his time playing with the legendary musicians, but had a desire to swing again and he felt he finally had the time to dedicate himself to jazz and uphold the tradition of learning the music in the streets from older musicians. He moved to Philadelphia in 2007 to complete his “doctoral studies” from mentors such as Tim Warfield, Orrin Evans, Mike Boone, Sid Simmons, Mickey Roker, Edgar Bateman, and Byron Landham playing gigs in Philadelphia and frequenting the jam sessions almost every night. He moved to New York in 2009 and within less than a year he started performing main shows as a leader at a variety of venues and has performed with such artists as Orrin Evans, the Captain Black Big Band, Nasheet Waits, Valery Pomonarev’s Big Band “Our Father who Art Blakey”, Eddie Allen, Jack Walrath, Ralph Peterson, Frank Lacy, Duane Eubanks, Bill McHenry, and others. Yokley has performed for world-renowned musician and producer Quincy Jones as well as being the special guest artist for the closing ceremony for the ARPA International Film Festival in Hollywood 2014. In 2015 he was commissioned to write music for the Philadelphia Museum of Arts exhibition *Represent: 200 years of African-American Art*, and his success as a bandleader and sideman has now lead him to the international stage performing as a sideman and as a special guest artist in Japan and Brazil.

Yokley formed his band Sound Reformation back in 2010 and they released their debut album “The Void” in 2012, which received favorable reviews from such critics as Brent Black

and Charles Latimer. Now in 2017 the band's popularity is growing even more and Yokley is set to release his second album "Pictures at an African Exhibition" with Truth Revolution Recording Collective which will feature Zaccai Curtis on piano, Luques Curtis on bass, Wayne Smith Jr. on drums, and special guest Nasheet Waits on drums for a double drum sextet which will be accompanied by small chamber wind ensemble and thirteen pieces of original art. The band recently premiered the project at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in January that received much praise by critics and audience members alike.

Alongside having a very busy performance and composing career Darryl Yokley is an active educator teaching at Westminster Conservatory in Princeton, NJ and the Fort Lee School of Music as well as being an active clinician. Darryl, who has taught at Westminster conservatory for over eight years now founded the Westminster Saxophone Quartet back in 2011 and has mentored young talented saxophonists, helping them develop their skills as young musicians and coaching the quartet to two first place finishes in competition at Carnegie Hall.

Darryl Yokley performs on a Selmer Mark VI on tenor with a [Vandoren](#) V16 T8 mouthpiece, [Vandoren](#) Gold MO Ligature, with [Vandoren](#) V16 reeds. For alto he performs on a Selmer Super Action 80 Series II with a [Vandoren](#) V16 A9, [Vandoren](#) Gold MO ligature, and [Vandoren](#) Java select reeds. He also uses the BREATHTAKING strap designed by Yumiko Komura. Be sure to sign up for our mailing list and to follow Darryl on social media for the latest news!