

jazz composers  
**Collective**

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IN THE COMPOSERS WORDS

Photo by Ben Allison



**MICHAEL BLAKE'S ELEVATED QUARTET**

**Don't apply your teeth to a vibrating noisemaker unless it is safe to do so.**

Sometimes bad shit just happens and things are going to go wrong no matter how hard you try to keep it together. Some of us in the Collective had a rough time on tour last fall. For a few days there, it was like running uphill against a headwind in four feet of snow with no pants on. What with our planet being tipped precariously on the brink of madness, the bizarre business practices musicians encounter, and then toss in plain old bad luck... Well, we really were on the road doing it for the music.

My body has not been responding well to the pressure of playing the saxophone. I've resolved that physically changing the way I make a sound is perhaps the best long-term solution to my problem. I've been blowing the same way – what I thought was the right way – for 20 years, but I knew there had to be a better method. So, this winter I decided to change my saxophone embouchure once and for all. If I can get this right, it'll be a small battle won by me for me. By improving the most basic aspect of making music I intend to persevere with a positive attitude.

Frank, Ben and Maze have shown me what trust and devotion are all about. When the times got rough, these guys pulled together and helped me get through the muck. So, more than ever, I want to thank them for their superb musicianship and support. Props to Ben and Sue for making this musician-run, non-profit, good-deed-doing organization rock for 10 years!

– MICHAEL BLAKE

Michael's new CD with his Quartet entitled *Elevated* will be released on the Knitting Factory label in March 2002. His previous CDs as a leader include: *Drift* (with his band Free Association), *Kingdom of Champa* (his critically acclaimed debut as a leader produced by Teo Macero), and *Redemption* (with his band Slow Poke) – all on Intuition Records. Michael also can be heard on recent recordings by Ben Allison (*Riding the Nuclear Tiger*, Palmetto Records), the Herbie Nichols Project (*Strange City*, Palmetto), and John Lurie and the Lounge Lizards (*The Legendary Recordings of Marvin Pontiac*, Strange & Beautiful Music). For more info, visit his website at [www.michaelblake.net](http://www.michaelblake.net).

**THE PETER APFELBAUM SEPTET**

**I've never come up with a name for the kind of music I do, although I can tell you how it came into being.**

My vocabulary reflects the fact that I started life as a drummer, was trained in jazz theory, blues and gospel music as a pre-teenager, became absorbed in African and Latin music as a teenager, listened to a lot of contemporary classical music, worked in R&B, reggae, blues, Latin, African, jazz, funk, Middle Eastern and Indian bands and, for as long as I can remember, I've been fascinated by how sounds can be fitted together. I usually compose from the piano, but occasionally I do it from the drums. I avoid playing the saxophone, however, unless it's absolutely necessary, since it drowns out all the other music in my head. I like to think of what we do as homemade music – music made from scratch. Cecil Taylor taught me the value of coming up with one's own chords, chord sequences, and rhythms.

In the aftermath of the explosion of musical structures in the mid-1960s, there were plenty of chords, rhythms and other musical fragments lying around, just waiting to be used. For those of us who had undertaken a lifelong commitment to music-making, by the early 1970s, this was a very fruitful time. New structures needed to be built, so jazz saw a re-assertion of the role of the composer, thanks to people like Roscoe Mitchell, Anthony Braxton, Wadada Leo Smith, Muhal Richard Abrams, Carla Bley, Karl Berger and others. These are people who showed me the way, and I think Braxton's use of the term *restructuralist* is a good one for describing their contributions.

Yusef Lateef, Don Cherry, and others introduced non-Western instruments to jazz, so when I started the Hieroglyphics Ensemble in 1977, it seemed perfectly natural to have a big band that included harmonium, ney, zurna, and Afro-Cuban percussion, along with violin, bassoon, brass, reeds, guitar and bass. For two years or so prior to the birth of the Hieroglyphics, I had been rehearsing and performing pretty regularly with three other classmates in a quartet called the Berkeley Arts Company. We were following in the footsteps of the Art Ensemble Of Chicago, and our performances were largely improvised. We discovered some amazing sounds and instrumental combinations along the way. For a while, I even thought that composed music was becoming obsolete. But since improvised performances have a tendency to be hit-or-miss, I eventually decided to try making compositions that would convey the kind of organic flow of a successful improvisation. So, my task had begun. But I was not alone; I think it's been a common goal for the *restructuralists* of the last twenty years to create expanded compositions that can incorporate group improvisation. After all, improvising is what jazz musicians are good at, so why limit them to the printed page? Additionally, something I think I share with others in my generation – like Sex Mob, Josh Roseman, Graham Haynes, Michael Blake, Will Bernard, Charlie Hunter, Medeski Martin & Wood, Jai Uttal, and Bill Laswell – is that we see the dance music of our time as having potential for creative development.

– PETER APFELBAUM

Peter is the founder of the 17-piece Hieroglyphics Ensemble, which has recorded two albums for the Antilles label: *Signs of Life* and *Jodoji Brightness*. In 1988 he began an association with the legendary trumpeter Don Cherry, who appeared frequently with the Hieroglyphics Ensemble and featured the group on his album *Multikulti* (A&M 1990). His most recent recording with his Sextet is entitled *Luminous Charms* (Gramavision/Ryko). Peter has worked with Cecil Taylor, Jim Pepper, Carla Bley, Charlie Hunter, Phish, Kamikaze Ground Crew, and Steven Bernstein's Millennial Territory Orchestra, among many others.



Photo by Peter Adams

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**THE JAZZ COMPOSERS COLLECTIVE  
10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**FESTIVAL @ THE JAZZ STANDARD / MARCH 19-24**  
The Jazz Standard • 116 East 27th Street, NYC

*Tuesday, March 19*

**BEN ALLISON & SEVEN ARROWS - 8PM**  
**HERBIE NICHOLS PROJECT - 10PM**

*Wednesday, March 20*

**MICHAEL BLAKE's ELEVATED QUARTET - 8PM**  
**MICHAEL BLAKE & FREE ASSOCIATION - 10PM**

*Thursday, March 21*

**FRANK KIMBROUGH TRIO - 8 / 10PM**

*Friday, March 22*

**BEN ALLISON & MEDICINE WHEEL - 8 / 10PM / Midnight**

*Saturday, March 23*

**TED NASH QUINTET - 8 / 10PM / Midnight**

*Sunday, March 24*

**RON HORTON QUARTET - 7PM**  
**HERBIE NICHOLS PROJECT - 9PM**

**THE JAZZ COMPOSERS COLLECTIVE PRESENTS**

**MICHAEL BLAKE's ELEVATED QUARTET**

**MICHAEL BLAKE** saxophones • **FRANK KIMBROUGH** piano

**BEN ALLISON** bass • **MIKE MAZOR** drums

*and guests*

**CLARK GAYTON** trombone • **PECK ALLMOND** tenor sax, trumpet

**THE PETER APFELBAUM SEPTET**

**PETER APFELBAUM** tenor sax, piano, percussion

**JOSH ROSEMAN** trombone • **CHARLES BURNHAM** violin

**DAVID PHELPS** guitar • **PATRICE BLANCHARD** bass

**DAFNIS PRIETO** drums & percussion

**ROBERTO RODRIGUEZ** drums & percussion

**THE NEW SCHOOL JAZZ PERFORMANCE SPACE**  
**55 WEST 13TH STREET (BETWEEN 5TH & 6TH AVENUES) NYC**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 8 PM**

**ADMISSION: \$10 (\$5 Students w/ID, Seniors)**

**TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR (beginning at 7:30 pm)**

**FOR MORE INFO: (212) 995-1552 • [www.jazzcollective.com](http://www.jazzcollective.com)**

