

Yuma Uesaka

Saxophonist | Composer | Educator

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"[Uesaka] susses out some powerful moments from his gentle lyricism."

-Dave Sumner, Bird is the Worm



Yuma Uesaka is a New York-based 25 year old saxophonist, composer, and educator from West Bloomfield, Michigan. He began playing the saxophone at age ten and soon after started to pursue jazz. During high school, he was a part of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Civic Jazz Orchestra, where he received tutelage from bassist Rodney Whitaker.

In May 2014, Yuma received his bachelor's degree in Jazz and Contemplative Studies (BFA) at the University of Michigan, where he studied under Robert Hurst, Geri Allen, Andrew Bishop, Ellen Rowe, and Martha Travers. Upon his graduation, Yuma received the Earl V.

Moore Award in Music, given to the most outstanding musician in the graduating class. While in Ann Arbor, Yuma performed with a diverse range of musical groups including Phil Ogilvie's Rhythm Kings, Tree City and the Contraband, Vincent Chandler Septet, and the University of Michigan Jazz Ensemble, at venues such as Cliff Bell's, Bert's, Dirty Dog Jazz Cafe, The Grotto, The Blind Pig, and Kerrytown Concert House. During his time at Michigan, he had the privilege of performing with numerous jazz greats such as Lee

Konitz, David Liebman, Jeff “Tain” Watts, Buster Williams, Geri Allen, and Robert Hurst amongst others.

In April 2014, Yuma performed in Shanghai, China at the Shanghai Jiao Tong University’s International Culture Festival. In July 2014, he spent a month in Mysore, India to learn the basics of Carnatic flute playing. In September 2014, Yuma led his quintet at the well respected Detroit Jazz International Jazz Festival, featuring some of his original music.

Yuma released his debut album, *Spear and Shield*, in July 2015. Dave Sumner from jazz blog, *Bird is the Worm*, praises the album as a “compelling debut from saxophonist Uesaka, who susses out some powerful moments from his gentle lyricism.”

Currently, Yuma resides in Brooklyn, New York immersing himself in the music scene. He spends his time performing, practicing, composing, and teaching.

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