

# MURRAY JAMES MORRISON

*Music educator, saxophonist, composer*

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## PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

- Ph.D. in Music Performance, Masters Degree in Jazz Studies, Bachelors Degrees in Music Performance and Theory.
- Jazz and popular music educator. Guest lecturer on a wide array of musical subjects. Former Foreign Expert with the Sichuan Conservatory of Music. Flexible and cross-disciplinary. Over 20 years total teaching experience.
- Musician, composer, and bandleader with an active performing and recording career.

## EDUCATION

New York University, New York, NY

Ph.D. Music Performance, GPA 3.91

*Saxophone Instructor:* Chris Potter

*Improvisation:* George Garzone, Jean-Michel Pilc

*Ensembles:* Joe Lovano, Stefon Harris, Jim McNeely, Kenny Werner

*Dissertation Title:* "Practitioner and Prophet: An Analysis of Sonny Stitt's Music and Relationship to Charlie Parker"

*Dissertation Advisor:* Dr. David Schroeder

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

M.M. Jazz Studies, 2007, GPA 3.96

*Saxophone Instructor:* Ralph Bowen

*Jazz Historiography:* Dr. Lewis Porter (Institute of Jazz Studies)

*Independent Study, Jazz Composition & Arranging:* Conrad Herwig

University of North Texas, Denton, TX

B.M. Jazz Studies, 2005, GPA 3.74

*Saxophone Instructor:* Jim Riggs

*Performed/Recorded w/* Two O'Clock Lab Band/Jazz Singers I/UNT Zebras

*Represented* Jazz Studies division *in music student government*

B.M. Music Theory, 2005, GPA 3.74

*Schenkerian Analysis, Counterpoint, Contemporary Composition and Analysis:*

Drs. Graham Phipps, Stephen Slottow, Timothy Jackson, and Joseph Klein

## **EDUCATION (CONT'D)**

Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton, AB, Canada

Music Diploma, 2001, GPA 3.55

## **EMPLOYMENT**

Fall 2013–Spring 2015, Foreign Expert, Sichuan Conservatory of Music

- Developed two new classes for instrumental and vocal performance majors: Popular Music Styles and Analysis, Jazz Improvisation.
- Prepared all lectures, teaching and testing materials. Provided the conservatory with outlines for a projected future textbook.
- Served as a main advisor on a campus-wide curriculum development initiative. Consulted on the creation of a new jazz studies degree.
- Directed and oversaw rehearsals for student and faculty ensembles (groups with singers, small jazz ensembles, pop and R&B cover bands).
- Course instruction (over 300 students a semester).
- Trained teaching assistants to assume teaching responsibilities in the future.
- Taught jazz/contemporary saxophone.
- All instruction in Mandarin Chinese.

Summer 2014–Spring 2015, Bandleader, The Dragonovsky Funk Project

- Bandleader, head composer, and saxophonist of an international funk/R&B/gospel group.
- A stylistic fusion of Chinese, Mauritian, and North American popular and traditional music influences.

Spring 2014, Musical Director, Defeng Zhang

- Directed a large-scale recital for a colleague at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music.
- Assisted with repertoire selection, composing and arranging for twenty musicians.
- Oversaw rehearsals and sectionals.
- Performed saxophone parts.

Fall 2011–Spring 2013, Professor of Saxophone, Sichuan Conservatory of Music

- Taught jazz and pop saxophone, music theory.
- Courses taught: Private Saxophone (all semesters), Teacher Development Course (Fall 2012–Spring 2013), Group Harmony and Improvisation (Fall 2011–Spring 2012).
- Developed a comprehensive saxophone performance curriculum, including improvisation, aural skills, jazz music theory, band interaction, and beginner piano technique.
- Assisted with developing testing and grading requirements for a 4-year undergraduate music program.

## **EMPLOYMENT (CONT'D)**

### **Fall 2011–2012, Head Composer, Rye Studios**

- Head composer of music for a Chinese computer software company.
- Oversaw all aspects of scoring, composition, and orchestration.
- Various styles: jazz, pop, rock and classical.
- Composed and produced music for numerous contexts: a children's rock musical, jazz and pop singles, background music, incidental music, jingles, sound effects, video games.
- Recruited musicians (vocalists, rhythm sections, wind and string players). Directed rehearsals. Supervised recording and mixing sessions.
- Handled MIDI composition and sequencing (Logic Pro).
- Mentored younger composers and interns.
- Wrote lyrics.
- Recorded saxophone and background vocal parts.

### **Spring 2011, Guest Artist, Sichuan Conservatory of Music**

- Conducted a 12-week masterclass series on jazz saxophone.
- Prepared all instruction, deliver lectures, workshop and troubleshoot with students.
- Topics covered: Jazz theory, jazz history, improvisation, ear training, the jazz repertoire, organizing small group ensembles, rhythm, developing a personal jazz sound.
- Organized a concert featuring masterclass students.

### **2011–Present, Freelance Arranger/Composer/Orchestrator**

- Arrange songs in various styles for singers and their groups.
- Compose and orchestrate music for live performances and shows.
- Assist with concert programming and song selection.
- Prepare scores and parts.

### **Winter 2010–Spring 2015, Saxophonist/Arranger, The Trouble**

- Performed alto, tenor and baritone saxophone in a popular Chinese ska band.
- Arranged music for 4-piece horn section. Conducted rehearsals.
- Performed in venues and music festivals throughout China.

### **Spring 2010–Spring 2015, Bandleader, Boss Ma Band**

- Co-leader, saxophonist, and composer for the leading jazz ensemble in Western China.
- Gave performances and masterclasses at major music conservatories and festivals nationwide.

## **EMPLOYMENT (CONT'D)**

### Summer 2009, Compositional Assistant to Stefon Harris

- Worked with Blue Note recording artist Stefon Harris on a commission for Imani Winds: "The Anatomy of a Box: A Sonic Painting in Metal, Wood, and Wind."
- Assisted with music research, orchestration, instrumentation.
- Prepared all scores and parts.

### 2007–2009, Department Assistant, NYU

- Assistant to Jazz Studies Director, Dr. David Schroeder.
- Assumed teaching and directing responsibilities when needed: NYU Jazz Orchestra, Brian Lynch Bebop Big Band, small ensembles, undergraduate music theory.
- Talked to prospective students.
- Coordinated faculty scheduling and room assignments, university gigs and performance opportunities, recording sessions, equipment.
- Assisted with ensemble placement and student registration.
- Managed department's two work-study students.
- Various clerical responsibilities.

### 2005–2007, Teaching Assistant, Rutgers University

- Instructor, "Survey of Jazz Styles," delivered lectures on music history, syllabus preparation, handled all instruction, testing, and grading responsibilities.
- Student Tutoring: classroom setting, answered student questions about music composition, performance, and theory.
- Assistant to the Big Band, various organizational and clerical responsibilities.

### 1996–Present, Private Teacher and Clinician

- Over twenty years of private instruction in music.
- Experience teaching saxophone performance, theory (jazz & classical), ear training, improvisation, composition and arranging, music history, music fundamentals.
- Group teaching, master classes and clinics.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

2018 "Practitioner and Prophet: An Analysis of Sonny Stitt's Music and Relationship to Charlie Parker," Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University.

## **RECORDINGS**

2018 *The Trouble*, Chinese ska band, debut album (forthcoming).

2015–2018 Musical sketches, compositions, and arrangements: "Highways and Hedges," "If I Fall in Love with You," "Happy New Year (in six-part harmony)," "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted," "Melody's Lullaby," "Some Christmas Music," "O Canada."

## **RECORDINGS (CONT'D)**

- 2013 “Jasmine,” song with Chinese pop music singer Fei Fei.
- 2012 *I Am a Tyrannosaurus*, children’s musical, Rye Studios.
- 2012 “Marine Life,” incidental music for educational children’s app, Rye Studios.
- 2011–2012 Background music, instrumental music, jingles, narration, songs, sound effects, video game music (both conventionally recorded and MIDI sequenced), various projects, Rye Studios.
- 2010 *No Beginning, No End*, Kenny Werner with Joe Lovano and Judi Silvano, Half Note Records.
- 2010 *Happy Every Day*, Murray James Morrison Quintet, solo album.
- 2010 *Time Difference*, Masakazu Mizuno.
- 2008 Kenny Werner/Quincy Jones project, incidental music for film.
- 2005 *Live at Uncommon Ground*, Snarky Puppy.
- 2004/2005 *Travellin’ the Route* with UNT Jazz Singers.
- 2004/2005 UNT Jazz Chamber Vols. 1-2 with various small groups.
- 2003–2005 Four semesters with Two O’Clock Lab Band (“Lifeline,” 2006 DownBeat winner).

## **INTERVIEWS AND PRESS**

- 2015 The Conversation, “Can Jazz Survive in China?,” interview.
- 2013 *Hello Chengdu* magazine, interview.
- 2011 *Ridiculous* magazine, “Jazz in Chengdu,” featured article.
- 2011 Lonely Planet/Discovery Channel TV documentary on music in China, band interview.
- 2011 sina.com.cn, “Zebra Festival: Crowd Joins ‘The Trouble’ in Dancing, Squeezing” performance review.
- 2010 chengdu.cn Entertainment News, “Best Jazz Group ‘Boss Ma’ Performs Zebra Festival,” interview.
- 2009 NYU Today, “NYUAD Institute and Steinhardt Host Inaugural Academic Conference in Abu Dhabi,” performance review.
- 2008 ChinesePod, “Jazz and China from a Different Perspective,” interview.
- 2003 CBC Radio Alberta, interview.

## **FESTIVALS AND PERFORMANCES**

- 2014 “Mad for Music” (TV program), Anhui Central Television, Anhui, China.
- 2014 Guiyang Music Festival, Murray James Morrison Quartet, Guiyang, China.
- 2013 Tianyu Music Festival, The Trouble, Lijiang, China.
- 2013 Erhai World Music Festival, The Trouble, Dali, China.
- 2012 Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Boss Ma Band, Shanghai, China.
- 2012 Big Love Music Festival, The Trouble, Chengdu, China.
- 2011 Zebra Music Festival, The Trouble, Chengdu, televised performance, Sichuan TV.

### **FESTIVALS AND PERFORMANCES (CONT'D)**

- 2011 Xindu Pomelo Culture Festival, The Trouble, Xindu, China, televised performance, CDTV.
  - 2010 Zebra Music Festival, Boss Ma Band, Chengdu.
  - 2009 Festival Bled in Vila Bled, Matevza Smerkola Sextet, Slovenia.
  - 2009 NYU Jazz Orchestra performance with Wayne Krantz, Blue Note NYC.
  - 2009 NYU Symphony Orchestra, music of Leonard Rosenman, Skirball Center NYC.
  - 2009 NYU Jazz Orchestra performance, the Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
  - 2008 NYU Kenny Werner Artist Ensemble, Blue Note NYC.
  - 2008 NYU Jazz Orchestra performance with Randy Brecker, Blue Note NYC.
  - 2008 NYU Jazz Orchestra performance with Jon Hendricks, NYC.
  - 2007–2009 NYU Jazz Orchestra performances with Lenny Pickett, locations worldwide.
  - 2007 NYU Jazz Nonet performance with Joe Lovano, Blue Note NYC.
  - 2007 Show Band/Orchestra musician, Princess Cruises.
  - 2007 Rutgers Jazz Ensemble performance with Frank Sinatra, Jr.
  - 2007 Rutgers Jazz Ensemble performance with Edward Simon.
  - 2006 Rutgers Jazz Ensemble performance with Eddie Palmieri.
  - 2005 North Texas Jazz Festival in Addison, opened for Chick Corea.
  - 2005 IAJE Conference, with UNT Jazz Singers I.
  - 2004–2005 Live performances with Snarky Puppy.
  - 2004 Small group performance, opened for The Headhunters, Granada Theater, Dallas.
  - 2002–2005 Denton Arts & Jazz Festival, various UNT ensembles.
- Performances at major jazz venues including Blue Note NYC, Bowery Poetry Club, Cachaca, Cecil's Jazz Club, the Beat Niq, Francis Winspear Center, Jazz Club Gajo Ljubljana, JZ Club Shanghai. Worked with Ralph Bowen, Ron McClure, Conrad Herwig, Michael Philip Mossman and Scotty Wright.
- Gigs and concerts throughout the United States, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, Slovenia and China.

### **LECTURES AND MASTERCLASSES**

- 2014 “Developing a Melodic Concept for Improvisation,” Shanghai Conservatory of Music.
- 2014 “How to Live *in* Music,” Sichuan Conservatory of Music
- 2013 “How to Play the Blues,” Xinghai Conservatory of Music
- 2013 “The Music of Miles Davis,” Xinghai Conservatory of Music
- 2012 “Building a Jazz Curriculum in China,” Shanghai Conservatory of Music.
- 2011 Twelve-week masterclass on jazz saxophone, Sichuan Conservatory of Music.
- 2008 “Improvisation 101,” JZ School, Shanghai.

## **HONORS AND REWARDS**

- 2009 “Costa Rica” competition, 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish, w/ judges Jeff Levenson (producer, Half Note Records) and John Newcott (producer, Verve Records).
- 2007–2009 Assistantship, New York University (full-tuition scholarship).
- 2006 DownBeat Student Music Award, Two O’Clock Lab Band.
- 2005–2007 Assistantship, Rutgers University.
- 2005 Graduation with Honors, cum laude, University of North Texas.
- 2002/03 & 2004/05 Academic Full Scholarship, UNT.
- 2002–2005 Jazz Scholarship, UNT.
- 2001–2005 Honor Roll, UNT.
- 2001 Dean’s List, Grant MacEwan College.
- 2001 GMC/UofA Jazz Band Scholarship, GMC.
- 2001 K Rock Scholarship, GMC.
- 2000–2002 Higher Education Award, Syncrude Canada, Ltd.
- 2000–2001 First Class Standing, GMC.
- 1999 Alexander Rutherford Scholarship, Alberta Heritage Fund.
- 1999 Entrance Audition Scholarship, GMC.

## **REFERENCES**

Available upon request.