

# Tia Fuller

## Professional Saxophonist, Composer and Educator

Jazz musicians are blessed with the desire and ability to play a genre that has a history as rich as its sound. All the greats, past and present know that it's not enough to simply play the notes, one has to live the music and feel it with every breath. When Mack Avenue recording artist, Tia Fuller picks up her sax to play, the two become one and something amazing happens as the notes and reverberations of her musical elixir fill the room. Suddenly, everything in the universe feels right and it's easy to see and hear why this artist and teacher, who has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music from Spelman College in Atlanta, GA, (*Magna Cum Laude*) and Master's degree in Jazz Pedagogy and Performance from the University of Colorado at Boulder (*Summa Cum Laude*), was selected to be a member of the all-female band touring with R & B star, **Beyoncé**. As part of the *Beyoncé Experience World Tour* promoting the superstar's *B'Day* CD, Tia played in various venues throughout the US, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. She is a featured soloist on the *Beyoncé Experience DVD (Me, Myself and I)* and also appeared on number of major television shows, such as *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, *BET Awards*, *American Music Awards* and *Total Request Live*.

An accomplished performer in her own right, Tia has recorded two CDs with her quartet. The first, *Pillar of Strength* (2005/Wambui), received praise as being "an exhilarating work that introduced her as a leader who strives for perfection" (Terrell Holmes, *All About Jazz Magazine*). Her sophomore release, *Healing Space* (2007/Mack Avenue), is an offering of "melodic medicine" that the wide-eyed optimist sincerely hopes will serve as a healing agent for those who indulge in it. Tia will be going into the studio in the spring of 2008 to record her third CD, which will be her second offering under the Mack Avenue label. She can also be seen performing regularly with a number of bands, including the **Ralph Peterson** Septet, the **T.S. Monk** Septet, the **Jon Faddis** Jazz Orchestra, the **Rufus Reid** Septet, the **Sean Jones** Quintet and the **Nancy Wilson** Jazz Orchestra.

The dynamic saxophonist has been featured in *Jazz Improv Magazine*, *Rocky Mountain News*, *The Philadelphia Tribune*, *The Star Ledger*, *Downbeat Magazine* and many other print and online publications. In addition to receiving numerous awards and marks of distinction, Tia was honored to be the keynote speaker at the Jazz Institute of New Jersey's 2003 graduation ceremony, where she presented her "Journey to Success" speech. In January 2008, she had the privilege of participating in a press conference with pianist and composer, **Danilo Perez** and the Governor of the Republic of Panama, Carlos A. Villarino.

Tia believes her passion for teaching and inspiring students is in her genes because her parents were educators/administrators in the Denver Public School District. As a devoted educator, she presents lectures and teaches ensembles and masterclasses at some of the most respected institutions in the country, including Stanford University's "Jazz Workshop," the University of Idaho's Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival, New Mexico State University, the IAJE Jazz Convention, Purchase College, WBGO's "Children in Jazz" Series, Duquesne University and Panama Jazz Festival.

Tia moved to Jersey City, NJ two days before the events of September 11, 2001. Despite the fact that the jazz community believed there was not much work in the area during that period, she wasn't discouraged and used the tragic event as a reason to succeed. She got her first gig playing in a big band at a fish fry in South Jersey. **Brad Leali**, who was playing in the Count Basie Orchestra at the time, spread the word that Tia was a skillful saxophonist who also played the flute. This brought her to the attention of others in the jazz community, including **Gerald Wilson**, **Jimmy Heath**, **Don Braden** and **Don Byron**, which led to her performing with a number of luminaries in the world of jazz.

With music in her blood and a song in her heart, Tia was born in Aurora, Colorado to jazz musicians, Fred and Elthopia Fuller. Her father, Fred plays bass and her mother, Elthopia sings. She grew up listening to her parents rehearse in the basement of their home, as well as the music of jazz greats, such as John Coltrane, Sarah Vaughn and Charlie Parker.

Inspired by her older sister, Shamie, Tia began playing classical piano when she was just three years old and continued until she was thirteen. She also began studying the flute when she was nine. Her interest in jazz came into fruition in high school. It was during this time that she began playing the saxophone.

The Colorado native, who now resides in Essex County, New Jersey, says playing music makes her feel as if she is a vessel for the Spirit to flow through. While listening to her songs, she wants people to be uplifted and experience a sense of restoration, compelling them to move forward not in fear, but in love and faith.



# TIA FULLER

MACK AVENUE RECORDING ARTIST

## PROFESSIONAL SAXOPHONIST, COMPOSER AND EDUCATOR

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### EDUCATION

#### **University of Colorado, Boulder, CO**

- Master of Music Degree, Jazz Pedagogy and Performance
- Summa Cum Laude

#### **Spelman College, Atlanta, GA**

- Bachelor of Arts Degree, Music
- Magna Cum Laude

### PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

#### **2008**

- Panama Jazz Festival
- Ralph Peterson Quartet
- Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival
- Lucca Donne Jazz Festival (Italy)
- Kansas City Jazz Festival
- Cecil Brooks III Quartet

#### **2007**

- Detroit Jazz Festival
- Jazz at Lincoln Center - Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola
- T.S. Monk Septet

#### **2006 – 2007**

- The Beyoncé Experience World Tour
  - 95 U.S. and International Cities (Europe, Asia, Africa and Canada)
  - The Beyoncé Experience DVD - Featured solo on "Me, Myself and I"
  - Video
    - "Irreplaceable"
    - "Green Light"
  - Television Appearances
    - The Oprah Winfrey Show
    - The Ellen DeGeneres Show
    - Good Morning America
    - Today Show
    - BET Awards
    - American Music Awards
    - MTV's Total Request Live (TRL)
    - Bravo TV (Germany)
    - BBC Radio 1 (London)

#### **2006**

- Newark Museum WBGO Jazz Concert Series
- Meyerhoff Symphony Hall "Soulful Symphony"
- Philadelphia Museum
- Brooklyn Museum of Art Jazz Series
- T.S. Monk Septet
- Don Byron Big Ban "Ebony Concerto"

#### **2005**

- Rufus Reid Quintet
- T.S. Monk Septet
- Don Byron Big Ban "Ebony Concerto"

**PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE – Continued****2004 – 2006**

- John Faddis Jazz Orchestra
- Sean Jones Quintet
- Ralph Peterson Septet

**2004**

- Jimmy Heath Septet
- Jon Faddis All-Star Octet
- Gerald Wilson Big Band
- Ralph Peterson Septet
- DIVA Big Band
- Kennedy Center

**2003**

- Mickey Roker Quartet
- John Swanna Quintet
- Kit McClure Big Band

**2002 – 2003**

- Tony Williams Jazz Festival
- Don Byron Big Band
- Charlie Persip Big Band

**2002**

- Don Byron Big Band
- Charlie Persip Big Band

**2001 – 2004**

- Duke Ellington Big Band

**2000**

- Ndugu Chancellor
- Jazz Fest Vien Festival
- Sisters in Jazz Septet

**1999**

- Sisters in Jazz Septet
- Kennedy Center
- Monterey Jazz Festival
- Clifford Brown! Stan Getz All-Star Sextet

**1996**

- Vail Jazz All-Star Octet

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE****2008**

- University of Idaho, Moscow, ID, Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival (Clinic)
- Panama Jazz Festival, Panama City, Panama (Masterclass and clinic)
- Kansas City Museum "Women in Jazz" Festival (Clinician, performance)
- Jazzaar Festival, Switzerland (Guest artist, big band clinician)
- Binghamton University (Guest artist, clinician, performance)

**2007**

- Aurora Hills Middle School, Aurora, CO (Lecture and performance)

**2006**

- New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM (Residency, Clinician, Masterclass)
- Bloomfield College "Jazz Talks" Series (Clinic)
- Drexel University (Clinic, Performance)

**2005 – 2007**

- Director, Jazz Museum of Harlem, *Harmony in Harlem Ensemble*

**2005**

- WBGO, Newark, New Jersey – Children's Jazz Series (Masterclass, lecture, performance)
- Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA, *History of Women in Jazz* class (Lecture)
- Purchase College, State University of New York (Clinician, combo, saxophone)
- Hanks High School Jazz Festival, El Paso, TX (Clinician, big band)

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**TEACHING EXPERIENCE – Continued****2004**

- Chaparral High School Jazz Festival, Parker, CO (Adjudicator, big band)
- Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS (Clinician, big band, masterclass, lecture)
- International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE) Convention (Clinician)

**2003**

- Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ, *Jazz Connections* (Masterclass, saxophone)
- Ohio State University, Columbus, OH (Clinician, big band)
- New School, New York, NY (Masterclass, harmony)

**2002 – 2005**

- Jazz Institute of New Jersey, New Brunswick, NJ (Instructor, saxophone)

**2001**

- New Jersey Private Schools (Instructor, computer, reading)

**2000 – 2004**

- Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA (Instructor, *Stanford Jazz Workshop*, combo, masterclass)

**2000 - 2003**

- Mile High Jazz Camp, Boulder, CO (Instructor, combo, masterclass)

**2000 – 2001**

- Aurora Public Schools, Aurora, CO (Clinician, big band, combo)

**2000**

- *Jazz in July*, Amherst, MA: Instructor (Combo, masterclass)
- Miami-Dade Community College, Miami, FL (Clinician, combo, big band)

**1998 – 2000**

- University of Colorado, Boulder, CO (Instructor, jazz improvisation, big band)

**1998 - 1999**

- Smiley Middle School, Denver, CO - *SummerQuest* (Instructor, music, drama, reading)

**ARTIST RECORDINGS**

- *Beyoncé - 50<sup>th</sup> Grammy Awards performance* (Recorded saxophone track and arranged horns for spoken word portion of performance)
- *In This Day*, E.J. Strickland Project (2008)
- *Kaleidoscope*, Sean Jones Quintet – Mack Avenue Records (2007)
- *Healing Space*, Tia Fuller – Mack Avenue Records (2007)
- *Turned to Blue*, Nancy Wilson Jazz Orchestra (2005)
- *Pillar of Strength*, Tia Fuller Quintet (2005)
- *Gemini*, Sean Jones – Mack Avenue Records (2005)
- *Maria Juanez*, Brad Leali Big Band (2004)
- *Vibrant*, Miki Hayama Quintet (2004)
- *Eternal Journey*, Sean Jones Quintet - Mack Avenue Records (2003)
- Kit McClure Big Band (2003)
- *Joe Budden* (Def Jam Records), Joe Budden (2002)

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**COLLEGE RECORDINGS**

- *Mile High Big Band*, University of Colorado at Boulder (2001)
- *Eternal Journey*, Fuller Sound (1999)
- *Reverence*, Spelman College (1998)
- *Elegance with Soul*, Spelman College (1995)

**TEACHERS/MENTORS**

- Joe Jennings
- Kenny Garrett
- Jesse Davis
- Michael Carvin
- Wessell Anderson
- Javon Jackson
- Cecil Bridgewater
- William Fielder
- Dr. Paul Cohen
- Bruce Williams
- Cecil Books, III
- T.S. Monk

**HONORS, PRESS AND SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS**

- Feature story – *Kansas City Star*, “*Tia Fuller Quartet: Quartet has Woman’s Touch*” (March 13, 2008)
- Feature story – *Westword News*, “*Fuller Sound*” (March 6 – 12, 2008)
- Feature story – *Jazztimes:Jazz Education Guide*, “*Sacred Swing*” (2007 – 2008)
- Press Conference with pianist and composer, Danilo Perez and Governor of the Republic of Panama, Carlos A. Villarino (January 23, 2008)
- Feature story – *Philadelphia Tribune*, “*Tia Fuller*” (August 17, 2007)
- Feature story - *Rocky Mountain News*, “*Aurora Saxophonist Plays with Beyoncé*” (August 17, 2007)
- Feature story – *Aurora Centennial*, “*Tia Fuller & Beyoncé*” (September 5, 2007)
- Feature story – *Star Ledger*, “*A Fuller Jazz Experience*” (July 1, 2006)
- Feature story - *Jazz Improv Magazine*, “*Saxophone Edition*” (Volume 5, Number 2)
- Feature story - *WBGO's Jazzmatazz Magazine* (Vol. XIV No. 3)
- IAJE Sisters in Jazz Selection Committee and Panelist (2004)
- Denzel Washington Tribute - White Plains, NY (2004)
- Keynote Speaker - *Journey to Success*, Jazz Institute of New Jersey Graduation (2003)
- Curriculum Development Advisor, Jazz Institute of New Jersey (2002-2003)