

Harrison Argatoff

Saxophonist, composer

Harrison Argatoff is a Canadian tenor saxophonist and composer. His music combines the study of free-improvised, jazz, and classical music to cultivate an enthusiastically eclectic, yet distinctly personal sound. Since Harrison first emerged as a leader and prominent collaborator in 2018, he has performed across Canada and released four innovative albums.

The first, *Dreaming Hears the Still* (2018), is a duet with co-leader and pianist Noah Franche-Nolan, which draws heavily from western classical and jazz performance practice. The second, *Trout in Swimwear* (2020), is a collaboration with co-lead jazz quartet *Harrison Squared*, featuring two of Canada's foremost jazz musicians: Mike Murley and Steve Wallace. The third, *Toronto Streets Tour* (2020), is a solo saxophone album which encapsulates a 2019 project of the same name, in which Harrison toured the streets of Toronto performing thirty consecutive solo concerts. Lastly, *Ontario 559 West* (2020), features co-leader Ian McGimpsey on acoustic guitar to blend singer-songwriter and contemporary jazz idioms, presenting fifteen short compositions.

Harrison was raised a Doukhobour in semi-rural British Columbia, surrounded by teachings of pacifism, communal music making, and a wide sweeping respect for life and nature. After years spent stubbornly resisting piano lessons to embrace long-haired rock and roll guitar, at age ten Harrison discovered, and was immediately captivated by, the saxophone. The result of his older brother's involvement in middle school band, the saxophone sparked an interest in instrumental music in both of Harrison's siblings, each of whose musicianship inspired consistent motivation and growth.

In his youth, Harrison studied with Craig Thomson, an impelling teacher and saxophonist based in Kelowna BC, who nurtured a profound fascination and appreciation for jazz music. Harrison was also honoured to play with the 2013 Conn-Selmer Center Stage Band, led by Alex Dean and facilitated by MusicFest Canada, the 2014 National Youth Jazz Combo, led by Kirk MacDonald and facilitated by Humber College, the 2015 TD Jazz Youth Summit, led by Jim Lewis and facilitated by the TD Ottawa Jazz Festival, and Dave Liebman's 2015 Saxophone Masterclass, in Stroudsburg Pennsylvania.

Harrison completed a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Performance from the University of Toronto in 2018. In addition to core jazz classes and ensembles, his unusual undergraduate trajectory included an in-depth independent study of 1970's French Spectral Music, membership in the classical faculty's contemporary *Chainsaw* ensemble, membership in Andrew Downing's graduate *Hybrid* ensemble, a recital featuring original solo saxophone music, and a recital premiering original composition *Music for 8 Musicians in Space*, a spatial exploration of moving sound sources around a centrally positioned audience.

At present, Harrison's efforts are spread between a variety of existing ensembles and conceptualizations, composing, performing, and continually learning. Harrison is currently a student of Sasha Rapoport, Wallace Halladay, and John Hollenbeck, three deeply impactful mentorships that were initiated with funding from a Canada Council for the Arts Professional Development Grant in 2020.