

John Tank Biography

To many Canadians, tenor saxophonist John Tank has been somewhat of a legendary figure in the world of live Jazz performance for the past forty five years. His unique voice has evolved out of a modern Jazz experience strongly rooted in tradition. His playing has been described as "creative, smooth, strong, rhythmic, harmonic and melodic."

Between 1961 and 1963 Tank travelled one hundred and forty miles weekly to study with the late concert saxophonist Paul Brodie, founder of the World Saxophone Congress and to date the most recorded concert saxophonist in history.

From 1964 to 1969 he attended the Berklee School of Music in Boston. Besides majoring in composition and arranging, the Berklee experience provided him with the opportunity to study Jazz improvisation both in the class room and especially at after hours jam sessions around town. Being in the company of so many players who also loved the music was one of his most inspiring experiences during those years.

In 1970, Tank moved to Toronto and performed as a leader and sideman with many fine Canadian jazz greats such as Bernie Senensky, Don Thompson, Terry Clarke, Sonny Greenwich, Lenny Breau, Michel Donato, Claude Ranger and Freddie Stone.

In 1974 Tank moved to New York and worked as a sideman in groups led by Sam Rivers, Paul Jeffery, George Coleman, Joe Morello, John Blair, Jack Walrath, Calvin Hill, Joe Lee Wilson, Monty Waters and others. He played with the great Charles Mingus on two recordings: "Me, Myself, and Eye" and "Something Like A Bird."

During the late 1970's and through the mid 1990's, he performed in England, France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and Spain. Live recordings were made for the BBC Radio, Canada House, the French National Radio and Dutch television in the Netherlands.

Tank has organized several tours of Ontario and Quebec over the decades, and recorded for CBC Radio Canada's "Jazz Beat" in 2000. Between 2004 and 2007 he played and toured in and around New Mexico, performing with local players in Tucson, Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Taos, and El Paso.

Some of Tank's stylistic influences include, Lester Young, Zoot Sims, Stan Getz, Paul Desmond, John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, Sonny Rollins, Joe Henderson, Dexter Gordon, and Warne Marsh. Other major influences are Igor Stravinsky, Bella Bartok, Charles Ives and Krzysztof Pendereki.