

SERIOUS

Alexander Hawkins Biography

Self-taught Alexander Hawkins is a pianist, organist, composer and bandleader who works steadily in a vast array of creative musical contexts.

In 2010 he was named four times in *Jazzwise* magazine's 'Who To Look Out For' spread and he featured on the official ballot in the organ category of the 75th *Annual Downbeat Readers' Poll*. Writers in the Spanish journal *El Intruso* voted him number 1 in the keyboard category and number 5 in the piano category, in their 2010 poll.

Hawkins' highly distinctive sound is forged through the search to reconcile his love of free improvisation with a profound fascination with composition and structure. His main vehicle as bandleader is the Alexander Hawkins Ensemble. The group's debut album, *No Now Is So*, was twice named one of the Top Ten albums of 2009 in the *Village Voice* and twice named debut of the year in the same publication. *Dusted* magazine listed it as a top album of 2009 and the band was featured in session on BBC Radio 3's *Jazz on 3* programme, and also in its 'Best Sessions of 2009' broadcast. The Alexander Hawkins Ensemble's second album, *All There, Ever Out*, was released in July 2011 on Babel.

Showcasing his commitment to collaborative music-making, Hawkins co-leads two further prominent ensembles. The Convergence Quartet features American Taylor Ho Bynum, Canadian Harris Eisenstadt and Dominic Lash from the UK. The transatlantic group's first album placed in various Top Ten Albums of 2007 lists, with Stuart Broomer declaring the record in *Point of Departure* to be 'a fundamental reassertion of composition within improvised music'. The Convergence Quartet's second album, *Song/Dance* (Clean Feed, 2010) was eagerly reviewed in the UK, US, Canada, and throughout Europe.

Additionally, Hawkins plays in the cooperative groups Barkingside and Decoy. Barkingside's eponymous debut album (Emanem) was listed in various Top Ten lists in 2008. Decoy – a trio with John Edwards and Steve Noble, in which Hawkins plays Hammond organ – 'redefine the words "shock and awe" ' (*Jazzwise*). According to *The Guardian's* John Fordham, the band's first two albums 'suggest a cult following is not far behind'. Their third album, featuring Joe McPhee, is described by Richard Williams as 'a vision not just of what music can be and do, but of what it can become'.

As well as work with Evan Parker and Louis Moholo-Moholo (being the regular pianist in the latter's Unit), Hawkins has worked with musicians such as Tom Arthurs, Mulatu Astatke, John Butcher, Paul Dunmall, Shabaka Hutchings, Eddie Prevost, Mark Sanders, Byron Wallen, Jason Yarde, and Steve Williamson, amongst others. Concert appearances have taken him to club, concert hall and festival stages in Belgium, Brazil, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the

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Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Ireland, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, and elsewhere.

Hawkins' music has been broadcast extensively on BBC Radio 3 and he has also been heard both interviewing and being interviewed for this station. He has recorded for television in Brazil and Greece and for radio in Slovenia. National Public Radio in the United States featured him in a 2010 '5 Young British Jazz Artists to Watch' piece and he also appeared on France Musique in an hour-long programme as one of five artists representing 'la nouvelle vague du jazz anglais.'

A participant in Edition VI of Take Five, the professional development programme for emerging jazz musicians, Hawkins has also been shortlisted for Edition I of Take Five: Europe.

alexanderhawkins.com

serious.org.uk/artists/alexander-hawkins

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