

SERIOUS

BEN COTTRELL

Biography

Based in Manchester, Ben Cottrell is a composer, arranger and saxophonist who is the mastermind behind the increasingly popular big band, Beats & Pieces.

Beats & Pieces was formed in 2008 as a vehicle for Cottrell's own compositions and arrangements and since then, the band has established a reputation as one of the UK's most exciting emerging jazz groups. A debut EP was released in 2009 on Efp Records - an independent label established and managed by Cottrell along with two other band members - and an album called *Big Ideas* will appear in the spring of 2012 on the same label.

Winners of the 2011 European Young Artists' Jazz Award - one of the continent's major jazz prizes that was judged in Germany at the Burghausen International Jazz Festival - Beats & Pieces has undertaken two UK tours gaining the attention of jazz audiences and critics alike: 'Few bands play work of this complexity with such passionate conviction. Movers and shakers such as Ben Cottrell demonstrate that large ensembles remain a vital force in contemporary jazz'. (Guardian)

Cottrell is also involved in many other projects, including free improvisation groups Token Otter and cottrell/findlay/hunter, both with strong links to the Manchester based experimental label Concrete Moniker, which released a CD by c/f/h in 2009. He also plays clarinet in a new chamber jazz ensemble, the 265 Quartet, which provides an outlet for his more formal compositions.

Cottrell's original approach to writing and arranging has also been put to good use by indie rock band Everything Everything who commissioned him to work with producer David Coyle to re-imagine and re-arrange their debut album *Man Alive* for the band to perform with a 15 piece orchestral ensemble for special live Christmas shows.

A participant in the seventh edition of 'Take Five' - a professional development scheme which is aimed at the UK's most talented emerging creative jazz musicians, Cottrell was chosen because of his compositional ideas and his impressive set of skills which include: composing, arranging, audio engineering, record producing, teaching (he holds saxophone teaching positions at the University of Manchester and Hope University in Liverpool) and playing. He studied on the prestigious Joint Course between the University of Manchester and the Royal Northern College of Music, where his principal study was contemporary classical saxophone. During his time at the RNCM, he received numerous prizes and awards, including performing a Highly Commended recital during the college's Gold Medal Weekend (its highest platform for solo performance) in 2009, which explored music for solo saxophones from soprano to bass combined with live electronic processing and multimedia.

For more information:

<http://www.serious.org.uk/artists/Ben-Cottrell#>
www.beatsnpieces.net
www.efpirecords.com
www.concretemoniker.co.uk