

Don Braden

Having spent years as the saxophonist with greats like Betty Carter, Wynton Marsalis, Freddie Hubbard and Roy Haynes, Don Braden has developed an extensive knowledge of every aspect of jazz performance. He is an imaginative, technically excellent, soulful saxophonist, and his harmonic and rhythmic sophistication give him a unique approach to improvising as well as composing and arranging. More importantly, he has a beautiful sound, and he swings! These qualities, combined with his joyous yet disciplined personality, make him one of the most important young musicians working today.

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio on November 20, 1963, and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, Braden's first exposure to music came from his parents' record collection and from radio. At age 13, he started playing tenor sax, and two years later, joined his first professional band. Braden was chosen first chair for the McDonald's All-American High School jazz Band and the McDonald's All-American High School Marching Band, and received a Yamaha instrument award.

Braden entered Harvard University in 1981. He became well known in the Boston jazz scene, performing at most of the jazz clubs. It was at Harvard that he became serious about his composing skills, writing and arranging pieces for several Harvard projects as well as for his own quartet.

In 1984, Braden moved to New York City where his first gigs were with the Harper Brothers Quintet and with Lonnie Smith, and then Betty Carter. He toured with the Wynton Marsalis Quintet for more than seven months, after which he recorded with Betty Carter on her Grammy Award winning album "Look What I Got" (Verve -Polygram). Braden was a member of the Freddie Hubbard Quintet from 1989 to 1991. Since 1991 he has worked with Kenny Barron, the Mingus Big Band, Tom Harrell, J.J. Johnson and others, as well as with his own groups.

Braden's most recent CD is "The Fire Within" on RCA Victor. He has recorded prolifically including eight albums as a leader. He is currently the music supervisor for the Cosby TV show and leads his own band.