

Andy Milne – Pianist /Composer • Bio Release



For over 30 years, two-time Juno Award winning pianist/composer Andy Milne has demonstrated boundless versatility, collaborating with dancers, film makers, authors, visual artists, poets and musicians spanning multiple genres. A fearless improviser and respected voice at the heart of New York's creative jazz scene, he has recorded and toured throughout the world with Ravi Coltrane, Ralph Alessi, Carlos Ward, Carla Cook and Steve Coleman, and has collaborated with a range of artists including Andrew Cyrille, Sekou Sundiata, Avery Brooks, Bruce Cockburn, Fred Hersch, Ben Monder, Dianne Reeves, Jen Shyu, Tyshawn Sorey and Jamie Baum. A former student of Oscar Peterson, Milne was at the center of the M-BASE Collective as a core member of saxophonist Steve Coleman's bands in the 1990s, performing frequently with Cassandra Wilson and Greg Osby. After a formative apprenticeship with Coleman, Milne stepped out on his own to conquer his own musical frontiers. He has subsequently formed multiple projects, including his longstanding quintet Dapp Theory in 1998 and his trio Unison in 2017.

Milne has released 11 recordings as a leader or co-leader and is also active composing for classical ensembles and scoring for film and television. In 2024 the Isidore String Quartet will perform with Milne and premiere his piano quintet commissioned by the Banff International String Quartet Competition. The Toronto Symphony with guest soloist Joe Lovano will premiere select orchestral arrangements by Milne as part of the John Coltrane: Legacy for Orchestra project. In 2023 Milne scored the "Revolution Redux" episode to the CBC Television documentary series "Black Life – Untold Stories". His music can also be heard in the Showtime series "Fellow Travelers", for which he served as a cast member, music arranger and director. Milne began working in film

and tv in 2011, scoring seven Star Trek themed documentaries for acclaimed actor/director William Shatner. He is a Yamaha Artist and sought-after educator, currently serving as a full-time assistant professor of music at The University of Michigan and is the Assistant-Director of The School for Improvisational Music. He has received numerous awards and commissions, including the prestigious Civitella Fellowship in Italy.

In 2017, Enriched with creative insights from his multiple projects, Milne formed his latest group, UNISON, to return to his first love, exploring the intimacy of the piano trio. The synchronistic relationship Milne has enjoyed with bassist John Hébert since 2010 is matchlessly rounded out with drummer Clarence Penn, who represents complimentary threads within the fabric of Milne's piano trio philosophy -- the intersection of texture and groove. In 2020, Sunnyside Records released UNISON's debut, "*The reMission*" which won the 2021 JUNO Award for Jazz Album of the Year: Group and has also received widespread media praise.

One of Milne's most ambitious project, *The Seasons of Being*, showcases a 10-piece ensemble featuring Dapp Theory, plus five distinguished guest improvisers. Commissioned by Chamber Music America, the music explores the body, spirit and mind on music, using the diagnostic principles of homeopathy to captivate the emotional characterization of each soloist. It premiered at Millersville University and Jazz at Lincoln Center in 2015. The recording, released on Sunnyside Records in 2018 was awarded the 2019 Juno Award for Jazz Album of the Year:Group. This special project follows the dynamic 2014 Dapp Theory release *Forward in all Directions*, produced by multi-Grammy winner, Jimmy Haslip.

In 2014, with support from The Japan Foundation and New Music USA, Milne premiered *Strings & Serpents* at Lincoln Center. The interdisciplinary collaboration combines two pianos and two kotos, with animation depicting The Rainbow Serpent Mythology. A synthesis of Japanese and Western structures in terms of melody, form, improvisational language and rhythm, the work merges musical and visual forms into a unified experience. *Strings & Serpents* will release their debut recording and tour North America in 2018.

In 2011, Milne composed, performed and produced the score to William Shatner's documentary film, *The Captains*. The relationship led to Milne scoring six subsequent Star Trek-themed films directed by Shatner. In addition to appearing in one of the films, Milne released The Captains soundtrack CD in partnership with Shatner and was a featured performer at numerous Star Trek conventions with actor/singer Avery Brooks. During this period, Milne attended the Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute at UCLA under the direction of George Lewis, and in 2013 was invited to compose for the American Composers Orchestra's JCOI New Music Readings.

Milne's early Dapp Theory recordings helped forge a foundation for the creative diversity he would explore in subsequent projects. Forming Dapp Theory in 1998, Milne cited his desire to "*tell passionate stories, promote peace and inspire collective responsibility towards uplifting the human spiritual condition.*" Milne used rhythm to

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bend listeners' minds and bodies, mixed R&B, jazz, rock, pop and hip-hop influences, and incorporated free-style and composed lyrics to promote a profound sense of social commentary within the music. One of the most compelling expressions of these ingredients was Milne's ambitious collaboration with Canadian folk-rock icon Bruce Cockburn on the 2003 Concord Records release, *Y'all Just Don't Know*.

In 2008, Milne was awarded the French-America Jazz Exchange from Chamber Music America and formed Crystal Magnets, a duo piano collaboration with French pianist Benoît Delbecq. Inspired by the 5.0 surround sound format, Milne set out to compose for the medium and record in harmony with that environment. During their recording residency at The Banff Centre, Milne and Delbecq exploited the unique potential for placing specific compositional elements in distinct regions of the surround sound mix. In 2009, Songlines Recordings released *Where is Pannonica?*, which The New York Times lauded as a "strangely beautiful new album" from two "resourcefully contemporary pianists, both drawn to quixotic interrogations of harmony and timbre."

Milne released two unique piano recordings in 2007. Both CDs received wide critical acclaim, presenting complementary reflections of his questing musical personality. *Dreams and False Alarms* [SongLines] features deeply considered re-workings of long-remembered pop/rock/folk/reggae classics, reaffirming and expanding Milne's creative process as a jazz improviser. *Scenarios* [Obliqsound] presents a more textural, almost cinematic series of intimate duo encounters with harmonica virtuoso Grégoire Maret. Their duo developed naturally during Maret's four years as a member of Dapp Theory. Also in 2007, Milne collaborated with tap dancer/choreographer Heather Cornell to create *Finding Synesthesia*, which premiered that year at the London Jazz Festival. Together they combined a wide and unexpected range of sounds and influences, integrally weaving tap into the texture and sound of the orchestration.

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