

“[Alexa is] a one-woman wrecking crew, [...] an indomitable force for expression, education, and absolute excellence.” - Wynton Marsalis, *Managing and Artistic Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center*

Alexa Tarantino is an award-winning, vibrant, young jazz saxophonist, woodwind doubler, composer, and educator. Alexa’s “lovely, ardent way of improvising,” and “sharply plotted but gracefully unencumbered straight-ahead jazz [compositions]” (Giovanni Russonello, *The New York Times*) establish her individual voice which shines through as a dynamic performer and educator. Tarantino was recently named one of the “Top 5 Alto Saxophonists of 2019” by the *JazzTimes* Critics’ Poll and nominated as a “Rising Star - Alto Saxophone” by *Downbeat Magazine*’s 2020 and 2021 Critics’ Poll.

Tarantino’s performance highlights include prestigious venues such as Jazz in Marciac Festival (with Wynton Marsalis and the Young Stars of Jazz), Umbria Jazz Festival (with Ryan Truesdell’s *Gil Evans Project*), the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, the Hollywood Bowl (with Sherrie Maricle & the DIVA Jazz Orchestra), the Rockport Jazz Festival (Alexa Tarantino Quintet), Rose Theater at Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts (with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra), and the Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival (with LSAT, Earth, Wind & Fire and others). She has performed regularly as a leader and sidewoman in a wide variety of ensembles and genres including the Alexa Tarantino Quartet, Cecile McLorin Salvant Quintet, Cecile McLorin Salvant’s OGRESSE Ensemble, Ulysses Owens Jr.’s Generation Y, LSAT (quintet co-led with baritone saxophonist Lauren Sevian), Arturo O’Farrill & The Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, and Sherrie Maricle & the DIVA Jazz Orchestra.

Tarantino leads her own quartet, which was featured at Dizzy’s Club at Jazz at Lincoln Center, Birdland Jazz Theater, Jazz Standard, and Times Square. *Firefly*, Alexa’s third record for Posi-Tone Records released April 2021, hitting #6 on the *JazzWeek* charts. Her previous album, *Clarity*, peaked at #9 on the *JazzWeek* Charts and landed at #54 for *JazzWeek*’s Top 100 records of 2020. Tarantino’s other recent projects include her quintet that she co-leads with baritone saxophonist Lauren Sevian called “LSAT.” LSAT was selected as the winners of the Made in New York Jazz Competition, where they performed with Randy Brecker, John Patitucci, and more. The two award-winning saxophonists have fused with a dynamic rhythm section that propels their music to new heights. LSAT presents original compositions highlighting the unique combination of baritone and alto saxophone, as well as their own interpretations of favorites from the jazz repertoire. LSAT recently headlined at the Jazz Educators Network Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA.

As a composer/arranger, Tarantino has written and/or recorded works for Lauren Sevian’s *Bliss* for Posi-Tone Records, Sherrie Maricle & The DIVA Jazz Orchestra’s 25th Anniversary, and Cécile McLorin Salvant’s Quintet. With Posi-Tone Records, her work can be heard on *Firefly*, *Clarity*, *Winds of Change*, *Something Blue*, *Lioness*, and *Works for Me*.

In addition, Tarantino has enjoyed opportunities as an instrumentalist in musical theater, such as performing in The New Group’s Off-Broadway Production of *Sweet Charity* starring Sutton Foster and directed by Leigh Silverman. Prior to *Sweet Charity*, she spent a year with Maurice Hines and the DIVA Jazz Orchestra as part of Hines’ production *Tappin’ Thru Life* for the show’s runs in Delaware, Off-Broadway in New York City, and Philadelphia.

Tarantino is currently on faculty for Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Youth Education Programs and directs one of their High School Jazz Academy big bands. She has also taken on a larger role in JALC’s Jazz for Young People Program, bringing music to New York City schools. Previously, she served as Jazz Saxophone Instructor at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Tarantino continues to visit several colleges, high schools, and summer jazz programs across the globe as a guest clinician, including the Rockport Jazz Workshop (MA), of which she is Founder and Director. Rockport Jazz Workshop, currently in its seventh year, expanded in just four years from a five-day program with 7 students to a two-week program with 120 students. During the global pandemic, Tarantino co-founded A Step Ahead Jazz workshop with pianist Steven Feifke. Their Summer Jazz Online featured guest artists including Wynton Marsalis, Jeff Coffin, Sherrie Maricle, and more. In February 2021, Alexa launched her new virtual community-style jazz education platform, *The Alexa Approach*.

She holds a Master’s degree in Jazz Studies from The Juilliard School and Bachelor’s degrees in Jazz Saxophone Performance and Music Education from the Eastman School of Music. Tarantino is a graduate

of Hall High School's award-winning music program in West Hartford, Connecticut and currently resides in New York City.

Alexa Tarantino is a Vandoren Artist and Yamaha Performing Artist.

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