

TIMOTHY McALLISTER

Saxophonist
Full Length Biography

Acclaimed saxophonist TIMOTHY McALLISTER is hailed as “one of the foremost saxophonists of his generation” by The New York Times, an “exemplary soloist” by Gramophone Magazine, and “a titan of contemporary music and the instrument” by The Plain Dealer, Cleveland. He is a leading advocate for expanding the saxophone repertoire with premieres of over 300 solo and chamber works, and has been presented by major symphonies, concert series, and music festivals worldwide.

An increasing number of pre-eminent composers have written concerti dedicated to McAllister, including, most recently John Adams, John Corigliano, Kenneth Fuchs, Adolphus Hailstork, Jennifer Higdon, Pierre Jalbert, Steven Mackey, James Lee III and Tyshawn Sorey, with upcoming commissions for McAllister by Zhou Tian, Viet Cuong, Paul Moravec, and Errollyn Wallen. He has performed in many of the world’s most prestigious venues including London’s Royal Albert Hall, the Sydney Opera House, New York’s David Geffen Hall and Carnegie Hall and Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw.

Recent highlights include McAllister’s debut with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Slatkin, performing John Corigliano’s *Triathlon*, written for him. McAllister premiered *Triathlon* with the San Francisco Symphony led by Giancarlo Guerrero in 2022 and can be heard on the world premiere recording of the work with the Nashville Symphony, to be released by Naxos later this season. This past season, McAllister performed and recorded Adolphus Hailstork’s *Saxophone Concerto* with double Grammy-winning conductor JoAnn Falletta and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra for Naxos. His previous recordings with Falletta include the Grammy Award winning disc of *Kenneth Fuchs: Spiritualist*, featuring McAllister as soloist on Fuchs’ *Rush* with the London Symphony Orchestra and Paul Creston’s *Saxophone Concerto* with the National Orchestral Institute Philharmonic.

World premieres recently performed by McAllister include Tyshawn Sorey’s *Adagio (For Wadada Leo Smith)*, which received the 2024 Pulitzer Prize for Music. McAllister, who has a long history of collaborations with the MacArthur Fellowship Award-winning composer, performed the world premiere of *Adagio* at the Lucerne Festival in 2022 and the American premiere with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in 2023.

Other recent performances include the Spain and Belgium premieres of Guillaume Connesson’s concerto *A Kind of Trane* led by Stéphane Denève, recorded with the Brussels Philharmonic for Deutsche Grammophon. His other notable solo appearances include the Buffalo, Detroit, Galicia, Hong Kong, Houston, Indianapolis, Royal Liverpool Lyon, Milwaukee, and Mineria (Mexico) symphony orchestras.

In 2013, McAllister gave the world premiere of John Adams’ *Saxophone Concerto* – described by The Sydney Morning Herald as “an astonishing performance” with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra under the baton of the composer in the Sydney Opera House. He is the soloist on the world premiere and Grammy winning recording of John Adams’ *Saxophone Concerto* and *City Noir* with David Robertson and the St. Louis Symphony.

Other engagements with the Adams *Saxophone Concerto* have included the BBC Proms with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, where he was only the second saxophonist to appear as soloist in the 120-year history of the Proms in Royal Albert Hall. Additional John Adams' 70th Birthday celebrations where he performed the work included the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Sao Paulo Symphony, New World Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Croatian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, and the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra.

Solo compositions premiered by McAllister also include works by Gunther Schuller, Caleb Burhans, Kati Agocs, Mischa Zupko, Roshanne Etezady, and Kristin Kuster as well as saxophone quartets and chamber works by William Bolcom, Martin Bresnick, Juri Seo, George Lewis, Emma O'Halloran, Fang Man, Erik Santos, Lee Hyla, Libby Larsen, Lei Liang, Huang Ruo, Bright Sheng, David Rakowski, Zhou Long, Chen Yi, Ken Ueno, Donnacha Dennehy, and David T. Little among others.

His multifaceted discography of over 60 albums has been recognized by Mark Stryker of the Detroit Free Press as "the top classical saxophone recordings in the industry." As both soloist and as soprano chair of the renowned PRISM Quartet, McAllister's critically acclaimed, internationally released recordings can be heard on the Chandos, Nonesuch, Centaur, Naxos, Albany, New Focus, and ECM labels, to name a few. In addition to his Triathlon recording on Naxos with the Nashville Symphony, McAllister's upcoming albums include Kenneth Fuchs's "After Orion" for Chandos Records and Steven Mackey's "Anemology: Concerto for Saxophone" with the Utah Symphony on the Pentatone label.

In great demand as an orchestral saxophonist, he frequently performs in the wind sections of the Chicago Symphony and Cleveland Orchestra, among others with career highlights including his appearance as saxophonist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic for Gustavo Dudamel's Inaugural Gala concert performing the world premiere of John Adams' major work, *City Noir* (released on DVD by Deutsche Grammophon). His reprisal of Adams's *City Noir* with the Berlin Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel appears on the composer's Grammy-nominated anthology.

McAllister is a member of the PRISM Quartet, acclaimed by the New York Times as "A bold ensemble that set the standard for contemporary-classical saxophone quartets." PRISM has been presented by Carnegie Hall, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and throughout Latin America, China, and Russia under the auspices of USIA and USArtists International. PRISM has also appeared as soloists with the Detroit Symphony and Cleveland Orchestra, and conducted residencies at the nation's leading conservatories, including the Curtis Institute and Oberlin Conservatory. Two-time recipients of the Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, PRISM has commissioned over 300 works by eminent composers, including Pulitzer Prize-winners Julia Wolfe, William Bolcom, Jennifer Higdon, Zhou Long, and Bernard Rands; MacArthur "Genius" Award recipients Tyshawn Sorey, Bright Sheng, and Miguel Zenón; and US Artists Fellow Susie Ibarra. *The Fifth Century*, PRISM's ECM recording with The Crossing, was awarded a 2018 Grammy for Best Choral Performance. In 2016, PRISM was named by its alma mater, the University of Michigan, as the first recipient of the Christopher Kendall Award in recognition of its work in "collaboration, entrepreneurship, and community engagement."

McAllister's interest in expanding the saxophone repertoire led to Project Encore, a collaboration with pianist Liz Ames, which commissions miniature works for saxophone and piano. Alongside the duo's conscious efforts to weave a wide array of influences into their playing, from modernism to minimalism or popular idioms including Latin, jazz, funk, and musical theater, they believe it is

increasingly crucial to foster partnerships with living composers representing a broad spectrum of styles and backgrounds. Their first album, *Project Encore Vol. 1*, features the music of Nina Shekhar, Jennifer Jolley, Andre Myers, Zoe Cutler, Griffin Candey, Matthew Evan Taylor, Karalyn Schubring, Marianne Ploger, Chad “Sir Wick” Hughes, Jim Territo, Armando Bayolo, Corey Dundee, Andrés Eloy Rodriguez, and Gonzalo Garrido-Lecca. *Project Encore, Vol. 2*, released in 2025, showcases works by Wynton Marsalis, Iman Habibi, Adam Schoenberg, Ellen Rowe, Cathy Likhuta, Chichun Chi-Sun Lee, John Wineglass, Justin Bush, Joel Puckett, Sean Hickey, Gregory Wanamaker, Lembit Beecher, Adam Silverman, Ephraim Champion, Rob Buckland, and Jennifer Higdon. Further, alongside Liz Ames and acclaimed saxophonist Branford Marsalis, McAllister has recently launched a new ensemble, the Marsalis-McAllister-Ames Trio.

A sought-after teacher, McAllister is Professor of Saxophone at The University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance, following professorships including Northwestern University, and Arizona State University. He spends his summers as a distinguished Valade Fellow/Instructor of Saxophone for the Interlochen Center for the Arts.

A co-founding faculty member of the annual American Saxophone Academy and the first American saxophonist to serve as an instructor at the European University for Saxophone in Gap, France, he has given clinics and recitals at many of the nation’s elite universities and conservatories. He holds regular summer workshops at the Arosa (Switzerland) and Orford (Quebec, Canada) Music Academies and for the University of Michigan MPulse Program.

Timothy McAllister holds the Doctor of Musical Arts and other degrees in music education, conducting and performance from The University of Michigan where he studied saxophone with Donald Sinta and conducting with H. Robert Reynolds. He is the only saxophonist to ever receive the School of Music’s most distinguished performance award, the *Albert A. Stanley Medal*. His numerous awards also include the Grand Prize at the 2001 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition as a member of the Ninth Circle Saxophone Quartet, and the Paul C. Boylan Award from the Michigan School of Music Alumni Society for significant contributions to the field of music. As a student, he was the featured soloist for the University of Michigan Symphony Band Centennial Anniversary Tour in 1997 and made his solo debut at age sixteen with the Houston Civic Symphony.

When not performing and teaching, Timothy is a sports enthusiast, enjoys cycling through the bike trails of Northern Michigan and spending time with his family and cat.

Timothy McAllister is a Conn-Selmer artist/clinician, and a Backun Woodwind Artist, assisting with research and mouthpiece design. He endorses Key Leaves and Peak Performance Woodwind products.

For more information on Timothy McAllister, please visit www.timothymcallister.com

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