

Tucker Antell

"Tucker Antell is one of a new breed of super musician."

--Jerry Bergonzi

"Tucker is a one-of-a-kind force in contemporary jazz improvisation. As secure as his position is on my short list, I am on his list of long-time fans."

--Hal Crook

"Just did a record with Tucker Antell where I had to solo after him on several songs. Those that know his playing know how daunting a task that is."

--Jason Palmer

"Super musician" Tucker Antell, is a Boston-area rising star to watch for. Growing up across the U.S., the tenor saxophonist has had an impressive 2016 year: from performing with Grammy-winning Jazz heavy weights to recording his first visual EP. And now, he is on his way to recording his first full album of originals later in 2017. "I feel this music is one of the most honest representations of myself, and this album will be the product of years of careful thought about what that sounds like," says Antell. It has been said on more than one occasion that **every solo Antell plays is a new journey** that seems to flow out of him effortlessly. He can execute exactly what comes to his head, no matter how complex or ambitious the line. This is, in part, due to the fact that he is never done tinkering and exploring what music has to offer. He pulls from an impressive combination of musical sources, ranging from Bach to Monk to James Brown- all of which have lead to this rare, chameleonic virtuoso. His curiosity and drive to dutifully improve his craft **has made him into the intimidating player he is today.**

Tucker's introduction to Jazz was handed to him through his grandfather's recordings of the Glenn Miller Orchestra. "He used to walk around the house singing and humming 'Chattanooga Choo Choo' and 'Little Brown Jug.' I had such a burning curiosity to know where those songs came from, but more importantly, could I figure out how to play them on my saxophone?" Tucker spent hours navigating the melodies of the classic, swing-era tunes by ear, playing along as if he were part of the old sax section. Even at a young age, Tucker showed a determination to uncover the secrets held in those recordings. **He practiced furiously until he could replicate each passage at tempo.** By age 13, Tucker was gigging with local area big bands in Sarasota, FL, receiving on-the-job training from seasoned pros. "Though I didn't realize it at the time, the opportunity to play those classic standards and sight read with veteran musicians was one of the most

formative and valuable experiences of my musical education. It was challenging, but it was fun. There really is no replacement for that kind of education.”

Tucker recorded his **first album, *Sarasota Saxes*, at the age of 16**, with the legendary saxophonist Al Gallodoro. Gallodoro took to Tucker right away, impressed with his sound, energy, and fearless solos at such a young age. Tucker went on to spend two years at the University of Michigan, where he was pre-med with a minor in music. However, it became clear to Tucker and to his music professors that his raw talent would be wasted if he did not try to pursue a career in music. Tucker took the plunge and moved to Boston, enrolling at the New England Conservatory to study with Jerry Bergonzi and George Garzone. “The two greatest things I learned from Bergonzi and Garzone were first, you’re never done learning, and second, **you don’t need anyone’s permission to play like yourself.**”

Since graduating from NEC, Tucker has continued to craft his sound and skills using the techniques, methods, and ideas his mentors instilled in him. In 2015, Tucker was a finalist for the Monk Institute, and over the past few years, has been featured on albums by composers Omar Thomas, Brian Thomas & Alex Lee-Clark, Gary Fieldman, and Mehmet Ali Sanlikol, among others. In 2016, Tucker was hand-picked to be a part of world-renowned Jazz trombonist and educator, Hal Crook’s, new band, Behind These Eyes. Along with BTE, Tucker took the stage with Berklee alums Antonio Sanchez, Esperanza Spaulding, Leo Genovese and Chris Cheek. To Hal Crook, choosing Tucker as the saxophonist came down to his soloing prowess. “Antell’s playing both attracts and holds my attention from beginning to end with formidable instrumental chops, technique, vocabulary and knowledge of the tradition, balanced by a **rare depth of imagination**, originality, taste, and creativity. In his playing, you hear the two dimensions of power inherent in **undeniably great improvisation: action and restraint.**” Tucker has also been a regular, featured performer at the esteemed Berklee Beantown Jazz Festival over the past few years.

While playing will always be the most important thing to Tucker, it is almost equally as important to him to interact with fans and share his knowledge with colleagues and students. In 2016, Tucker launched a YouTube channel with the hope that he could provide instruction for his many followers who tend to ask, “how do you do what you do?” He released a series of short, instructional videos, “Tucker’s Tutorials,” which teach different practice routines for varying skill levels. Through clear, concise demonstrations Tucker shares his methods for improving technique and improvisational fluency. In addition to his tutorial and performance videos, Tucker released his **first visual EP** of originals in the summer of 2016.

He is now **planning his first major album**, which will draw upon all of his influences and experience with not only Jazz, but also the Blues and groove-infused music he has spent that last ten years playing across New England. Tucker's passion for this specific fusion of music comes across in a fun and honest way: singable melodies, danceable grooves, and stretched, creative improvisations--with a few twists and turns along the way. "I didn't want to have to leave out any of the elements of the different music that I love, so I tried to combine them all, and the result is this fun collage that isn't watered down or overly heady."

At his core Tucker Antell is driven and invigorated by the endless search for new melodies, expressive devices, saxophone techniques, and the overall rewarding process of trying to be the best instrumentalist that he can be. "He has his own sound and approach that reflects all the obvious influences, without sounding directly like any of them" says Boston Pops Player, Bob Bowlby. "**Tucker is truly one of the most prolific improvisors I've seen since Mike Brecker.**" While the artistic journey during a musician's life never reaches a defined finish line, Tucker hopes that along the way, he can inspire and teach others through an **honest and unique voice** that he has dedicated his life to searching for and refining.