

Josh Rzepka – Musician and Composer

Twenty-seven year old rising trumpeter and composer Josh Rzepka has been described as “*a musician who doesn’t believe in limits*” by the **Tribune Chronicle**, and as being “*gifted*” by the **Cleveland Plain Dealer**. He has been heralded not only for his jazz playing and composing, but for his classical trumpet playing as well. Josh is a native of Akron, Ohio, and current resident of Cleveland Heights, Ohio.



Quickly establishing himself as one of the most versatile upcoming performers in classical and jazz music, Josh has performed across the country at famed venues including Severance Hall, Boston’s Symphony Hall, Cleveland’s NightTown, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Knitting Factory in NYC. As a soloist Josh has presented recitals and concerts ranging from the baroque, to modern, to original jazz. Appearances in Canada and on radio and TV have brought him to the attention of an international audience.

In 2011 Josh was recognized by the Akron Area Arts Alliance with their 2011 *Arts Alive! Rising Young Star/Artist* award. This biennial award recognized his musical achievements and contributions to NE Ohio's music scene.

Into the Night: With his second jazz album *Into the Night* (2011), he follows up his debut classical CD, *Josh Rzepka: Baroque Music for Trumpet* (2010), and his debut jazz CD *Midwest Coast* (2009). *Into the Night* is an album comprised of all original music that was recorded in the summer of 2011. This new album is a followup to his jazz debut *Midwest Coast* (2009), an album that was met with critical acclaim and received wide radio play reaching the **#33 position on the JazzWeek chart, #15 on CMJ Jazz**, and **#2 on the Roots Music Report Jazz chart**, a reflection of airplay on over 100 radio stations in nearly every major market in the country.

Into the Night was recorded by the multi Grammy-award® winning recording and production company, 5/4 productions in Oberlin’s new Bertram and Judith Kohl Building. The album is dedicated to the memory and teachings of the late Dr. Wendell Logan – founder of the jazz program at Oberlin Conservatory.

On *Into the Night* Rzepka leads a “**topnotch sextet**” on “**nine tracks of original compositions that show Rzepka and company to be a formidable ensemble**” with “**consistently tight ensemble playing**” - *Cleveland Classical*. Dan Polletta of **90.3 WCPN** writes in the liner notes “**it’s easy to hear that he’s a player who understands that the tone you get on your horn tells much of the story. Josh’s is pure and warm and his solos have the unhurried maturity of a much older player.**” Sharing the spotlight is an ensemble containing many of NE Ohio's finest jazz musicians, including fellow Oberlin alumnus Jackie Warren (piano), Michigan native and current Brooklyn resident Andy Hunter (trombone), Oberlin professor Peter Dominguez, and NE Ohio natives Steve Kortyka (sax) and Ron Godale (drums).



Making Moves: In 2009 Josh decided to take a major step in his career, he would record and release a jazz and classical solo CD within the same year - on his own. He knew only a few

certainities, that the jazz CD would be comprised of all originals, the classical CD would be with a string orchestra, and that they would be recorded and produced in NE Ohio. Josh said “I feel very fortunate to be able to call NE Ohio my home, and the musicians here are truly first class.”

The first recording made and released was his jazz debut *Midwest Coast*, an album of all original music that has been called “**a winning, listenable recording debut**” and “**an impressive display of chops and taste**” by *Cleveland SCENE*. It was recorded in the summer of 09’ in legendary SUMA Studios in Painesville, Ohio. Besides Rzepka’s “**cool, relaxed warm tone**” - *Akron Beacon Journal*, *Midwest Coast* features some of Cleveland’s finest jazz musicians – including Peter Dominguez, Jackie Warren, and Ron Godale.



In the winter and spring of 10', while completing his Masters of Music at Boston University's College of Fine Arts, Josh recorded his debut classical album in NE Ohio with a string orchestra, *Josh Rzepka: Baroque Music for Trumpet*. This album features the music of Antonio Vivaldi, George Phillip Telemann, George Friedrich Handel, Henry Purcell, Giuseppe Torelli, and Johann Baptist Neruda. Recorded in Cleveland and Oberlin by 5/4 productions, it features Rzepka as a soloist playing concertos and solo pieces backed by twelve strings and a harpsichord with one selection featuring the accompaniment of an organ.

Early history: Josh attended *The Lippman School* in Akron where he began to learn and play the trumpet in the fourth grade band. While Josh was in grade school his parents began to expose him to great music. They bought him CDs by jazz trumpeters Dizzy Gillespie and Maynard Ferguson, and took him to Cleveland to hear live jazz and classical music. However, it was at Firestone High School that his seriousness for music really took hold. He performed in the jazz band, wind ensemble and small jazz combos. After performing the *Carnival of Venice* for state competition his junior year he was invited to play with the nationally acclaimed Tri-C JazzFest All-Star Band where he got to open for Gregory Hines, perform with internationally renown jazz musicians, perform at the Tri-C JazzFest, and perform in conjunction with the Monterrey Jazz Festival. As music had become his life, he then decided to attend college for music and to focus all of his energies on music.



College years: Josh attended the Oberlin Conservatory for his undergraduate studies where he completed a double major of classical and jazz performance. He received his masters degree from Boston University's College of Fine Arts.

Looking Ahead: As far as “what’s next?” Josh is looking to tour and present classical and jazz concerts all across the country. He continues to compose and is currently planning future jazz and classical recording projects. He lives in Cleveland Heights Ohio as a working musician, playing as many as twenty gigs a month while maintaining a full teaching studio.

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