

Clay Jenkins Biography

Clay Jenkins' career as a jazz artist has covered a wide range of musical experiences and responsibilities, bringing him to the forefront of the jazz performing and teaching arenas.

Clay's experience as a performer began at an early age, playing and recording with the Stan Kenton Orchestra. In 1978 Clay moved to Los Angeles, where he was in demand as a performer and studio recording musician, and toured with the big bands of Buddy Rich and the Count Basie Orchestra.

Since moving to Rochester, New York in 2000 to join the Eastman faculty, Clay has maintained a busy performing, recording, and teaching schedule. He has remained active throughout the United States and abroad. Clay continues to perform and record with the Clayton/ Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, of which he is a charter member and whose trumpet section also included the great Eugene "Snooky" Young (1919-2011).

Clay's close friendship with Snooky Young led to three guest appearances at Eastman by the great trumpet player, and Clay recently established the "Snooky Young Endowed Scholarship" at Eastman to assist under-represented minority students. Clay is currently writing a biography of Snooky Young.

Clay has performed on over one hundred recordings. He has released seven solo recordings under his name, and as a co-leader he has recorded with Gene Bertoncini, Kim Richmond, and Don Aliquo. Additionally, Clay has also recorded with Joe LaBarbera's Quintet, The Clayton/Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Harold Danko, Rufus Reid, Alan Ferber, and Charles Pillow. Clay also records with his Eastman colleagues Jeff Campbell and Rich Thompson as "Trio East." Clay's latest recording project, soon to be released, included guitarists Gene Bertoncini and Larry Koonse, drummers Joe La Barbera and Jeff Hamilton, and bassist John Clayton.

Clay attended North Texas State University (now the University of North Texas) where he earned his bachelor's degree in music theory. He received his master's degree in jazz studies from the University of Southern California.

Clay plays Edwards Trumpets and is a performing artist for The Edwards Instrument Company.