

# ADAM BENJAMIN

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## EDUCATION

Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY: 1995-1997.

California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA: 1997-1999.

B.F.A., Jazz Studies, California Institute of the Arts, 1999

M.F.A., Jazz Studies, California Institute of the Arts, 2006, accelerated graduation with honors

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2006-08      Guest Lecturer and Jazz Faculty, Banff Jazz Workshop, Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta, Canada  
Lectures, masterclasses and lessons on composition, improvisation, and musicological topics.
- 2007-08      Adjunct Primary Lesson Instructor, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA  
Teaching primary lessons to Master's Jazz Studies students in improvisation and composition.
- 2005-08      Visiting Artist and Jazz Faculty, School for Improvisational Music, New York, NY  
Curriculum design and implementation in programs for advanced students and professionals.
- 2004-08      Founding Faculty Member, Academy of Creative Music, Oakwood School, Los Angeles, CA  
Curriculum design and implementation of a Jazz Studies program for an upper-level conservatory  
preparation summer music program.
- 2007          Visiting Artist, Stanford Jazz Workshop, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA.  
Lecture and concerts on topics of improvisation, composition, and careers in jazz.
- 1998-99 &  
2004-06      Teaching Assistant, California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA  
Classroom teaching in Jazz Eartraining and Transcription, coaching jazz ensembles,  
primary lessons in Jazz Piano and Jazz Composition.
- 2000-08      Visiting Artist and Clinician, Various Institutions.  
Extensive experience as a traveling clinician, as a solo artist and lecturer and with his collective  
quintet Kneebody, including such notable jazz programs as the Eastman School of Music,  
California Institute of the Arts, Bennington College, Denver University, Queens College,  
the University of Nevada at Reno, and many others.

## PERFORMANCE/DISCOGRAPHY

**Dave Douglas and Keystone:** Since joining Douglas' Grammy-nominated electric project in 2005, Adam has done extensive international touring with this star-studded band, featuring a 2006 performance at Carnegie Hall. Live works include multidisciplinary scores to the films of Roscoe Arbuckle and Bill Morrison as well as concert performances. Adam has been featured on the band's three albums, *Live at Jazz Standard* (2008), *Moonshine* (2007) and *Live in Sweden* (2005).

**Kneebody:** Adam's collective quintet has been hailed as one of the most unique and significant bands in jazz today, receiving critical acclaim from the *New York Times*, *Downbeat* magazine and many others. Their most recent album is a reinterpretation of the songs of Charles Ives, in collaboration with vocalist Theo Bleckmann (*Twelve Songs by Charles Ives, Winter and Winter*, 2009). In 2007, they headlined and curated the *Festspiel Plus* contemporary music festival at the Munich Opera House in Munich, Germany in collaboration with renowned conductor Kent Nagano, were featured as breakthrough artists at the North Sea Jazz Festival, and co-headlined the San Francisco Jazz Festival.

**Charles Ives Project:** In 2008 Adam took part in a large-scale recontextualization of the songs of Charles Ives for singer Theo Bleckmann and Kneebody, most notably contributing a musical suite based on Ives' "The Housatonic at Stockbridge". This intriguing project casts new light on the brilliant Ives songs, rendering them in vast and complex electric and electronic textures, seamlessly integrating improvisational elements. Commissioned by Kent Nagano and the Staatsoper Bayerische, the work debuted in New York and Munich in 2007 and will be released as a full-length CD on the *Winter + Winter* label in 2009.

**Solo Piano:** In 2008 Adam's debut solo piano recording *Long Gone* was released on the Swiss label *Kind of Blue* to widespread critical acclaim. Its eclectic but unified program features unique interpretations of Coltrane, Ornette, Beach Boys, Tears for Fears, and American folk song as well as his own compositions. Adam's memorable solo performances include piano, Rhodes, synthesizers and electronics, as well as readings of original stories and essays, and creative methods for audience interaction.

Adam has also toured, performed and recorded with Tony Scott, Todd Sickafoose, Bennie Maupin, Darek Oles, Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan and Jimmy Chamberlin, and many others.

Adam was recently named a Rising Star in Jazz in the 2008 *Downbeat* magazine's Critic's and Reader's Polls.

## WRITING

Adam has been a featured columnist for Greenleaf Music's Artist Thoughts blog since 2006, writing several essays on jazz education and its evolution. He has recently begun publishing his own blog focusing on music, teaching, touring and American culture.

Adam has begun research for a book on college-level jazz education in America, which will focus on its history, its place within the academy, its complex relationship with the professional world of jazz performance, and the range of possibilities that the Jazz Studies discipline embodies. Jazz Studies is the most quickly growing field within the conservatory and may be poised to replace traditional instrumental performance study as the primary enrollment mechanism of American music schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Benjamin poses the question: do we have a firm handle on what this shift means, and what possibilities it engenders?

## PRESS AND HONORS

*On Adam's work with Kneebody...*

"A heady blend of aggressive rock music conventions, gorgeously baroque pop melodies, virtuosic jazz improvisation and intricate compositional smarts, Kneebody forges headlong into the future."

- All About Jazz

"This audacious jazz-rock-funk band makes the most of its hybrids, often savoring the crunch of collision."

- The New York Times

*On Adam's 2007 notorious solo album "It's a Standard, Standard, Standard, Standard World", an electronic adaptation of 37 jazz standards...*

"...a majestic tour de force."

- Dave Douglas

"The perfect combination of enjoyable music and side-splitting laughter."

- Ralph Alessi