
Azar Lawrence Biography

Azar Lawrence

"Life is a Mystic Journey, Fulfill Your Destiny"



Saxophonist, Azar Lawrence's musical studies began at age five. A classically trained violinist and pianist his formal instruction were under the direction of his late mother, music teacher and educator, Ima Lawrence. Born in 1952 at home on Los Angeles' famed Central Avenue, (Southern California's Jazz Mecca during the 1920's - 40's) the vibe of that scene clearly seeped into his musical consciousness.

A member of the USC Jr. Orchestra (University of Southern California), from age five to eleven, he turned to Alto sax by age twelve.

He was also was a member of the famed Dorsey High Jazz Band under the direction of Herbert Baker. While in high-school he would meet the late Reggie Golson, and become an extended member of Benny Golson's family. And thanks to Reggie, Azar's professional music life began in his late teens when he was asked to join Elvin Jones' band, Jazz Machine, (after being introduced to Elvin by friend, Reggie) and immediately his stature in the jazz

world placed him amongst the elder statesmen of post-bop.

While performing for years with Elvin Jones he headed up Fantasy/Prestige Records, and after his years as part of the McCoy Tyner Quartet he went to work for Capitol Records as a songwriter, and was Executive Assistant for Stan Neufeld at Orion Pictures for Hollywood Squares and Outside Productions.

As a leader his seminal work, *Bridge Into The New Age*, 1974 lauded as a classic, was re-released twice over the past two years. He worked with Skip Scarborough on the first instrumental version of *Can't Hide Love*, for his *People Moving* album and wrote three songs for Earth Wind & Fire's *Powerlight* album performing on keys.

His discography is diverse with names like Frank Zappa, Busta Rhymes and impressive where he performs on titles such as Woody Shaw's *Moontrane*, and Miles Davis', *Dark Magus*, recorded live at Carnegie Hall in 1974.

Within the past three years, Azar has performed, written, and produced three CD's *Speak The Word*, *Prayer For My Ancestors*, (*Prayer* was given honorable mention for Best of 2009, *AllAboutJazz/New York*, January 2010) and *Mystic Journey*.

Mystic Journey received several Best of 2010's, including *Downbeat Magazine*. Azar also lead and co-produced a live tribute album, *Legacy and Music of John Coltrane*, in 2006.



"Saxophonist Azar Lawrence's influential faculties and stylistic attack loom as significant contributions to the state of jazz, a genre that continually reinvents itself. "Walk Spirit, Talk Spirit," is one of several euphoric pieces that surges this album into the upper echelon of 2010 releases."

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