

JOEL SPENCER
Music Educator
Professional Musician

And then there's jazz drummer Joel Spencer, whose audacious energy level, swing, chops and authority ought to make a lot of better known drummers nervous. Since the untimely death of Tony Williams, there isn't another drummer in jazz who performs with as much control or flexibility. Spencer never stops conversing. He always seems to be daring his musicians to keep pace with his creativity.

- Mark Stryker, Detroit Free Press

Joel Spencer has been a Professional Musician and Music Educator for the past 25 years.

As a professional drummer, Joel has performed with a number of internationally known jazz artists in Chicago and throughout the world. These appearances have included such artists as Weather Report alumnus Wayne Shorter, David Liebman, Hank Jones, Cedar Walton, Barney Kessel, Clark Terry, Michael Feinstein, Cissy Houston, the Red Rodney Quintet, Joe Williams, Scott Hamilton, John Campbell, Dorothy Donegan, the Count Basie Band, Chet Baker, Sonny Stitt, Junior Mance, Phil Woods, Wynton Marsalis, Benny Golson, and pianist/conductor Daniel Barenboim of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

In recent years Joel has traveled to Europe appearing at Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen with the Jazz Members Big Band, the Umbria Jazz Festival in Perugia, Italy with vocalist Joe Williams and pianist Dorothy Donegan, The North Sea Jazz Festival in Holland with jazz pianist Ellis Marsalis and bassist Major Holly and the Red Sea Jazz Festival in Eilat, Israel with Frank Tiberi and a select group of Chicago musicians sponsored by the Ameritech Corporation.

Recording work in Chicago has provided Spencer with a busy schedule. This type of work ranges from commercial radio and TV ads to record sessions and movie soundtrack recording.

In 1991 Joel recorded several pieces for the movie soundtrack *In a League of Their Own*. In 1992 the soundtrack for this movie was eventually released on Columbia Records.

In 1997, *The Brighter Side: The Joel Spencer/ Kelly Sill Quartet featuring Chris Potter and Garry Dial*, was released on Jazz Alliance Records. The recording has received radio play and critical acclaim throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan.

1997 brought the release of the soundtrack for the MGM motion picture *Hoodlum*, for which Spencer provided all of the drum tracks. In 2005, he finished recording the soundtrack for the soon-to-be-released United Artists motion picture: *Unconditional Love*.

1999 brought the release of two additional recordings: *Interior Window- Joel Spencer & Mike Kocour* (Lakeside Jazz of Chicago Records), which was nominated for "Best Jazz CD of 1999" by The Chicago Music Awards.

In addition, another release included Spencer's performance on *Tribute to Ellington* with Chicago Symphony conductor/pianist Daniel Barenboim and a select group of musicians from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In September of 1999 Barenboim and the "Ellington Tribute Orchestra" traveled to Berlin to perform the European record release for *Tribute to Ellington* (Atlantic Records).

In October of 2003, Joel performed with jazz pianist Junior Mance and jazz alto saxophonist Phil Woods for the "Jazz Party At Sea" aboard the Norwegian Sun. In October of 2004, Spencer returned to the Norwegian Sun performing with the Benny Golson Jazztet. The Jazztet featured legendary saxophonist Benny Golson, trumpeter Terell Stafford, trombonist Curtis Fuller, bassist Buster Williams and pianist Michael Kocour, who currently serves as Director of Jazz Studies at Arizona State University. Kocour and Spencer, along with Chicago bassist Kelly Sill, are featured on their new CD release: *High Standards*.

In May of 2004, Spencer served as an accompanist and performer for the National Jazz Piano Competition at the Jacksonville Jazz Festival in Jacksonville, Florida. Also in May of 2004, Spencer appeared as a feature clinician at the National Vintage and Custom Drum Show in Chicago sponsored as an Endorsement Artist by the Premier Drum Company.

In May of 2005, Joel appeared at the University of Illinois Jazz Festival in a performance dedicated to the legendary Thelonious Monk as member of the *Monk Tribute Orchestra*, which featured saxophonist Chip McNeill and trumpeter Jon Faddis.

While Spencer is predominately recognized for his career accomplishments as a jazz artist and recording musician, his career has not been limited to performance only. Joel has always maintained a very active schedule as an educator and clinician while pursuing his career as a performer.

In 1978 he earned his Bachelor of Science in Music Education from the University of Illinois and continued on at Illinois as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the Jazz Ensemble Program under the tutelage of the late celebrated musician and instructor, Professor John Garvey.

From 1979 through 1981 Joel served as Assistant Professor in Music Education at Joliet Junior College, Joliet, IL. In addition, from 1986 through 2001 Joel served as Jazz Percussion Instructor at DePaul University, Chicago, IL.

September of 2001 brought Spencer to the Northwestern University School of Music as a half-time Lecturer in the Jazz Studies and Pedagogy Program under the directorship of Professor Donald Owens. In September of 2004, Joel became a full-time faculty member in the Northwestern University School of Music as *Artistic Coordinator of Jazz Studies*-serving as Coordinator of the Jazz Combo Program, Conductor of Jazz Ensemble, Lecturer of Jazz History, and Instructor of Graduate Studies in Jazz Pedagogy and Studio Jazz Percussion. In 2006 Spencer was promoted to *Director of Jazz Studies* where he served in the position until the end of the 2007-2008 school year.

Joel also maintains his private studio where he instructs a number of students per week. These students are college level performers who are preparing for a professional career. Throughout each school year Spencer travels to a number of colleges throughout the country, presenting drum set clinics and guest artist appearances.

Spencer remarks, “I look forward to high school and college music festivals each year because they provide an environment for learning and communication with young musicians, which has proven to be a very rewarding experience”.

ENDORSEMENTS

Joel Spencer currently serves as an Endorsement Artist for the following products.

Premier Drums

Zildjian Cymbals

Regal Tip Sticks and Brushes

Aquarian Drum Heads