

sam sadigursky

composer/saxophonist

biography 2009



Saxophonist, multi-reedist and composer Sam Sadigursky is one of the most versatile musicians of his generation, equally comfortable in a variety of stylistic and improvisational landscapes. His critically-lauded first recording, *The Words Project*, hailed as “an impressive debut” by the *New York Times*, was given a four star review by *Time Out New York*, who also named it one of the Top Ten Albums of 2007. Noted music critic Steve Smith called it “that rare anomaly: a jazz-and-poetry record that sounds utterly natural and convincing.” And his 2008 follow-up, *Words Project II*, just released on New York’s New Amsterdam Records label “may even surpass the first one” as reviewed by jazzchicago.net. His unique sound and sense of lyricism has been noted by *Cadence Magazine* for its “subtlety and restraint, combined with power and purpose.”

Sadigursky was born and raised in Los Angeles, California, the first-generation son of classical musicians from the Soviet Union who first made eyes at each other in an ear training class at conservatory. He started taking piano lessons from his mother at an early age and later studied with famed saxophone teacher Vince Trombetta, who also taught legendary saxophonist Michael Brecker. While still in high school, performed with jazz legends Brad Mehldau, Milt Hinton and Ray Brown and was the recipient of a grant from the National Foundation for Advancement of the Arts (NFAA). It was also alongside Brown that Sadigursky had his first recording session at age nineteen. During this time, he had the further distinction of playing for all the living U.S. presidents at a summit in Philadelphia and touring Japan representing the Monterey Jazz Festival. Not long after, Sadigursky made an auspicious New York debut – his first two venues in NYC that he played were Carnegie Hall (JVC Jazz Festival) and Birdland.

Sadigursky attended William Paterson University where he was mentored by jazz great Rufus Reid. While a student in their prestigious jazz program, founded by Thad Jones, Sam started playing in a number of New York jazz clubs and was chosen as the outstanding member of the department upon graduation. During this time, he also toured with internationally recognized pianist Sergio Salvatore.



As a sought-after sideman, Sam has performed with, among others, the Mingus Orchestra, ECM recording artist Anat Fort, and Gabriel Kahane. He appears on numerous recordings for labels such as Fresh Sound/ New Talent, Playscape Recordings, Chonta Records, and World Culture Music and is featured on saxophone and flute on the score to the film *Seeing Other People*. He has played in the Aspen, Ravinia, and CMJ festivals as well as New York venues such as Brooklyn Academy of Music, Joe's Pub, and Lincoln Center.

Thoroughly steeped and seasoned in jazz styles and tradition but equally comfortable in world music, Sadigursky has a keen interest and talent for Latin music. He's played saxophone, clarinet and flute with folkloric and jazz-based Colombian, Brazilian choro, Argentinian and Cuban ensembles - performing regularly with artists such as Lucia Pulido, Edmar Castaneda, Marvin Diz, Folklore Urbano, and La Cumbiamba e Neye.

As a composer whose works show a deep knowledge and fascination with classical harmony and instrumentation, he has been commissioned by vocal groups, film directors, and has collaborated with modern dance choreographers in live performance of their works. He is a three-time winner of the ASCAP Young Jazz Composer Award and more recently recipient of a prestigious Chamber Music America/French American Cultural Exchange grant involving an upcoming collaboration with French pianist/composer Laurent Coq in Paris.

In 2009, Sam produced the first in an ongoing series of New Art Song concerts featuring composers and ensembles working in this medium. Future recording projects include an album of miniatures - all settings of poems and texts, chamber and electronic influenced; another *Words Project* recording with vocalist Christine Correa and the Dan Tepfer Trio; a recording of his *Terezin Suite*, songs set to texts by children at Nazi concentration camps; and an instrumental jazz CD of original compositions.

Sam speaks and writes eloquently about music and has been featured in interviews on David Garland's "Ear to Ear" program on WNYC (2008) and Minnesota Public Radio's "The Jazz Connection" (2008). Of Sadigursky's passion for vocal compositions based on poetry, he comments "The use of words in music can provide a much needed entry point for listeners and an interesting challenge for composers. Despite the limitations of working with a text, numerous possibilities that stretch the composer's imagination are created. The marriage of the two can captivate listeners and provide them with a unique experience, especially when this meeting doesn't overshadow the truest and deepest components of jazz: creativity, interaction and spontaneity."

For more information, visit www.samsadigursky.com.