

RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA - alto saxophone, composer

Few musicians share the ability of Rudresh Mahanthappa to embody the expansive possibilities of his music with his culture. The saxophonist/composer hybridizes progressive jazz and South Indian classical music in a fluid and forward-looking form reflecting his own experience growing up a second-generation Indian-American. Just as his personal experience is never wholly lived on one side of the hyphenate or the other, his music speaks in a voice dedicated to forging a new path forward.

The current manifestations of that trajectory include his latest project *Bird Calls* (2015), which was named #1 album of the year by both *Downbeat* and NPR Music's Jazz Critics Poll. This 21st Century tribute to Charlie Parker, which *Downbeat Magazine* recently named Best Album of 2015, includes a stellar band of pianist Matt Mitchell, bassist François Moutin, drummer Rudy Royston, and 20-year old trumpet prodigy Adam O'Farrill. The 2013 album **Gamak** featured guitarist David "Fuze" Fiuczynski, whose own microtonal vocabulary opened new possibilities for Mahanthappa's compositional imagination, alongside bassist Francois Moutin and drummer Dan Weiss. The 2010 release of **Samdhi** (ACT Music + Vision), a multi-cultural ensemble that advances Mahanthappa's blend of jazz and Indian music with modernist electronic music, was described by *JazzTimes* as "*a landmark convergence of styles that didn't lend itself to easy analysis... new music of this caliber hasn't been attempted before.*" Other recent projects run the gamut from the cross-generational alto summit **Apex** featuring Bunky Green; trios **MSG** and **Mauger**; the quintet **Dual Identity** co-led with fellow altoist Steve Lehman; and **Raw Materials**, his long-running duo project with pianist Vijay Iyer. Mahanthappa also continues to partner with Pakistani-American guitarist Rez Abbasi and innovative percussionist Dan Weiss in the **Indo-Pak Coalition**, while giants in both jazz and South Indian music have recognized his success: he was enlisted by Jack DeJohnette for the legendary drummer's new working group, while a collaboration with the renowned Carnatic saxophonist Kadri Gopalnath resulted in Mahanthappa's critically-acclaimed 2008 CD *Kinsmen* (Pi).

Hailed by the *New York Times* as possessing "a roving intellect and a bladelike articulation," Mahanthappa has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, two New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowships, and numerous commissions. He has been named alto saxophonist of the year four of the past five years in *Downbeat Magazine's* International Critics Polls and for five years running by the Jazz Journalists' Association. In April 2013, he received a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, one of the most prominent arts awards in the world. In 2015, he was named a United States Artists Fellow.

Mahanthappa is a Yamaha artist and uses Vandoren reeds exclusively.