



# FKAJAZZ

SAXOPHONIST | MUSIC PRODUCER | DJ

## CONTACTS

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## ABOUT

***“Under the bold, fresh artistic identity FKAjazz (formerly known as...), NYC based Saxophonist/DJ Samir Zarif lays the dynamic groundwork for the possibilities of what jazz is for his generation and provides a vision for what the cherished American art form can be moving forward.”*** Jonathan Widran, *Jazziz*

Originally from Houston, Texas, FKAjazz moved to New York after living in New Orleans where he built the foundation of his artistry as a jazz saxophonist studying and performing with such notable figures as Terence Blanchard, Aaron Neville and Jason Marsalis. After moving to New York, FKAjazz has been a part of numerous projects, touring the globe and recently was nominated for a Grammy with Miguel Zenon for the album “Identities Are Changeable.” Alongside his achievements in the genre of jazz music, FKAjazz has also become a figure in Electronic Music, Hip-hop & R&B as a music producer, DJ and saxophonist. An extended biography can be found at [www.fkajazz.com/bio](http://www.fkajazz.com/bio).

## EDUCATION

- **High School for the Performing Arts** (Houston, TX)
- **University of New Orleans**, Jazz Studies Degree, 2000-2004 - Basin Street Scholarship (full scholarship)
- **Manhattan School of Music**, Jazz Studies Masters Degree, 2004-2006

## SKILLS

**FKAjazz** performs regularly as a saxophonist/dj/keyboardist combining these mediums in a dynamic and exciting way. However, his talents do not stop there. He grew up playing piano since the age of 3, and has been studying music and music composition throughout his musical life. He has performed with renowned musicians & composers as a saxophonist, and has DJ'ed at some of the most popular clubs in New York including Webster Hall & Verboten. His skill as a music producer has enabled him to work with an array of talented artists over the years, and adds to his ability to self-produce his own material, giving him the title by *United Press International* as a “triple threat.”

## CURRENT PROJECT

**FKAjazz** is the moniker for Samir Zarif's culmination of skills as a saxophonist/dj/producer performing original music from his album influenced by Black American Music (Jazz, Funk, R&B and Hip Hop), a mix of with original beats & compositions, Hip-hop and R&B remixes and covers; normally featured in two configurations, either as a trio featuring FKAjazz simultaneously dj-ing, playing saxophone & keys with live drums and an MC, or as a full band with the latter joined with a pianist, bassist and sometimes a guitarist. FKAjazz recently released his debut album, *Stereotype Threat*, which has received raving reviews from such publications as *The United Press International* and *Jazz Ed Magazine*. As stated by D. Oscar & Heide Grooms in *O's Place Magazine*, “It's a solid, funky, dance party.”



## PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

### **JAZZ ED MAGAZINE** by Christian Wissmuller

Originally from Houston, Texas, tenor and soprano saxophonist Samir Zarif first began catching the attention of many when he moved to New Orleans, where he performed often with the likes of Ellis Marsalis, Nicholas Payton, and the Jason Marsalis Quintet. With the release of his newest album, *Stereotype Threat*, Zarif unveiled his new artistic identity, FKAjazz (FKA = formerly known as), moving jazz forward even further into new and exciting territories, incorporating elements of hip hop, traditional jazz, R&B, and other musical forms...

### **UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL**

"...On his forthcoming release '*Stereotype Threat*', the triple threat Musician/Producer/Writer doesn't disappoint. This is clearly a man on a mission. He takes traditional jazz and twists into a force that is uniquely his own. He fearlessly plays with precision and a passion that takes you on a musical journey like no other. As promised, there is Greatness here."

### **O'S PLACE** by D. Oscar & Heide Groomes

Riveting, electronic, club beats dominate the landscape of "*Stereotype Threat*," the latest release from saxophonist FKAjazz (aka Samir Zarif)...

### **ALL ABOUT JAZZ** by Mark F. Turner

Among the many new voices with something unique to say, Texas-born saxophonist Samir Zarif's *Starting Point* is as fresh a debut as they come. A member of the internationally acclaimed group *The Story*—whose names include rising stars, pianist John Escreet and saxophonist Lars Dietrich—Zarif also contributed to singer Maria Neckam's memorable *Deeper* (*Sunnyside*, 2010). In both cases, his horn has been impressive, but leading and composing his own release is a real opportunity for the saxophonist to shine...

### **ICON MAGAZINE** by Nick Bewsey

Like many of his contemporaries, Texas-born saxophonist/vocalist Samir Zarif isn't boxed in by tradition, which makes his splendidly realized debut recording, "*Starting Point*," something to talk about. Zarif programs his recording like a suite, and it's clear that he finds sonic quality to be as vital as rhythm and harmony...A meticulous musician with a gifted ear for composition, much of the album reaches for Trane-like highs with reverential tunes...and sinewy horn solos... [With] his "jazz beyond jazz" approach...Zarif expertly fuses poetry slam performance art...with spacey pop electronics...

### **ALL ABOUT JAZZ** by Raul D'Gama Rose

Zarif is a horn player who brings a searching soulfulness to both soprano and tenor saxophones. There is an almost inaudible vibrato in his playing as he makes deep and searing forays into the after world of spiritualism. In this respect, he directly follows the John Coltrane of later years. But Zarif is a singular voice as well. His tone is somewhat dry, and his ponderous journeys into the realm of harmonic invention are characterized by the gilt-edged glide of broad glissandos. Moreover, his playing assumes an almost cubist personality as he brings a statuesque, Zen-like imagery to the exploratory phrases and lines that pepper his musical excursions, especially when he employs his own voice to narrate his lyric poetry and when he slides in the electronics...

## SELECTED PROJECT HISTORY (including current collaborations)

- Rennie Harris Funkedified
- Jill Scott
- Jason Marsalis Quartet
- Fred Thomas & the JB's
- DJ Jazzy Jay
- Miguel Zenon Identities Big Band
- Rennie Harris
- Michael Olatuja Lagos Pepper Soup
- Soulful Symphony
- Marcus Machado
- Daru Jones
- Elise Testone
- JSWISS
- Camille Gainer-Jones & the Immortals
- Mimi Jones
- Hans Glawischnig
- Arcolris Sandoval
- Pax Humana
- Aaron Neville
- Ric Molina
- The Story
- Samir Zarif Quintet
- Dylan Golden
- Dave Binney
- Maria Neckam
- The Paislies
- New Orleans Jazz Orchestra
- Sophie Milman



## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- **Time.Era.Period (2018) - BD3**
  - tenor & alto saxophone, clarinet
  - Independent Release
- **Stereotype Threat (2017) - FKAjazz**
  - tenor saxophone, vocals, producer, mix engineer
  - Independent Release
- **Time (2016) - Milán**
  - producer, mix engineer
  - Independent Release
- **Feet in the Mud (2016) - Mimi Jones**
  - tenor & soprano saxophone
  - Hot Tone Music
- **Identities Are Changeable (2014) - Miguel Zenón (Grammy Nominated)**
  - tenor saxophone
  - Miguel Zenón
- **A New Frontier (2014) - Pax Humana**
  - songwriter, producer, mix engineer
  - Independent Release
- **@Dreamland (2013) - Ric Molina**
  - tenor & soprano saxophone
  - Gutshot Records
- **Jahira (2012) - Hans Glawischnig**
  - tenor & soprano saxophone, composer
  - Sunnyside Records
- **Unison (2012) - Maria Neckam**
  - tenor saxophone
  - Sunnyside Records
- **A Matter of Heart (2012) - Pax Humana**
  - soprano saxophone, producer, mix engineer
  - Independent Release
- **Starting Point (2010) - Samir Zarif**
  - tenor & soprano saxophone, producer, composer
  - Independent Release
- **The Story (2009) - The Story**
  - tenor saxophone, composer
  - Independent Release
- **The Paislies (2006) - The Paislies**
  - tenor & soprano saxophone, composer
  - Independent Release
- **Beautifully Human: Words & Sounds Vol. 2 (2004) - Jill Scott**
  - tenor saxophone
  - Hidden Beach

## TOUR EXPERIENCE (VENUES, FESTIVALS & MASTER CLASSES)

- **New York**
  - New Victory Theater
  - New York City Center
  - Winter Jazz Festival
  - BRIC Jazz Fest
  - Fall for Dance 2018
  - Blue Note
  - Carnegie Hall
  - Soho House
  - Ludlow House
  - Rockwood Music Hall
  - Webster Hall
  - Club Bonafide
  - Minton's Playhouse
  - Fat Cat
  - The Iridium
  - and more
- **United States**
  - Three Keys (New Orleans)
  - SFJazz Center (San Francisco)
  - Logan Center for the Arts, University of Chicago
  - Snug Harbor (New Orleans)
  - New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival
  - Newport Jazz Festival
  - University of Massachusetts
  - The Hippodrome (Baltimore)
- University of New Orleans
- Loyola University (New Orleans)
- The Falcon (Marlboro, New York)
- and more
- **Canada**
  - The Rex (Toronto)
  - Humber College (Toronto)
  - McGill University (Montreal)
  - Upstairs (Montreal)
  - Diese Onze (Montreal)
  - Ottawa Jazz Festival
  - York University (Toronto)
  - and more
- **Europe**
  - Bimhuis (Amsterdam, NL)
  - North Sea Jazz Festival (Holland)
  - The Tunnel (Vienna, Austria)
  - Cafe Alto (Amsterdam, NL)
  - Pizza Express (London)
  - JJ Smyth's (Dublin)
  - Hnitta (Belgium)
  - Paradox (Tilburg, NL)
  - The Spin (Oxford)
  - Guimaraes Jazz Festival (Portugal)
  - and more