

Matt Haviland

TROMBONIST • COMPOSER • ARRANGER

"Controlled passion." Those words were used by W. Royal Stokes of Jazz Times to describe the instrumental style of jazz trombonist Matt Haviland, known for his vibrant tone and adventurous melodic improvisations. He has been in demand as a performer and featured soloist with some of the top names in jazz, including the Illinois Jacquet Big Band, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Maria Schneider, Steven Bernstein's Millennial Territory Orchestra, and the Mingus Big Band, among others. He is a regular member of several New York-based groups, including the Pete McGuinness Jazz Orchestra, Scott Reeves Jazz Orchestra, Diane Moser's Composer's Big Band, Peter Leitch's New Life Orchestra, and Frank London's Shekinah Big Band. Other freelance work has included Blood Sweat & Tears, Deodato, Manny Oquendo & Libre, and Broadway pit orchestras (*Swing*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *The Color Purple*, and others).

Haviland also has a reputation as a gifted composer and arranger. His writing features prominently on his own recordings *Beyond Good & Evil* (2006) and *Something to Say* (2020), in each case interpreted by stellar musicians he has developed a close musical rapport with over the years. Haviland's compositions and/or arrangements can also be heard on recordings by the Harper Brothers, Charli Persip, the Composers Big Band, and vocalist Shirley Crabbe. Other credits include arranging commissions (Illinois Jacquet, Westchester Jazz Orchestra, Frank London, Vincent Herring), an extended work for big band plus chamber orchestra, an NEA composition grant, and participation in the BMI Jazz Composers Workshop under Bob Brookmeyer and Manny Albam.

Born June 17, 1961, in Des Moines, Iowa, Haviland was raised in Summit, NJ, with three older siblings. Strong and lasting influences include the humanist and pacifist Quaker values of his family and a deep appreciation for an artist's life and work—as demonstrated by both grandmothers in the visual arts. After starting out on baritone horn, Matt picked up the trombone in middle school to join the jazz band. From then on, he focused on the slide horn and his new-found passion for jazz. At the age of 15, he received as a gift his first jazz trombone recording, *The Golden Horn of Jack Teagarden*, beginning of a lifelong interest in the man and his music. Other recordings providing early influence included those by Jimmy Knepper, Count Basie, Al Grey, and the peerless J.J. Johnson.

Haviland attended Berklee College of Music in Boston, studying jazz composition and arranging as well as performance. Mentors included Herb Pomeroy, Ken Pullig, and Phil Wilson—the latter providing much encouragement and recommendations for playing and writing work. Berklee also attracted a vast pool of talented young jazz artists, leading to inspiring collaborations and lasting musical relationships.

Immediately after graduating, Haviland moved to New York, settling first in Brooklyn and later in Manhattan. Diving into the jazz scene, he grew exponentially as a player and began building an impressive resume, including U.S. and international tours. In the 1990s, he and his wife Lynn bought a home in Nyack, New York, where they raised their son, Graham, and Matt was very active in bringing jazz to the lower Hudson Valley while keeping busy in the New York freelance scene. They eventually moved back to NYC, which Haviland once again calls home.

Matt continues to grow as a player and writer, always exploring new means for personal expression. "Musicality is my operating principle," says Haviland. "While technique is important in both playing and writing, ultimately I want the melodies, improvisations, and interaction to carry the day. Two of my favorite trombonists, J.J. Johnson and Jack Teagarden, did that with completely musical ideas and near-perfect execution of concept. That kind of achievement really inspires me."