

TOMMY SMITH YOUTH JAZZ ORCHESTRA – TORONTO 2008



tommy smith **youth jazz orchestra**



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You can listen to 1 track featuring the **TSYJO** LIVE in Toronto, aired on **WBGO** radio:

<http://www.wbgo.org/blog/?p=181>

"I heard your band in Toronto and they really sounded great. Outstanding soloists all around." - **Jamey Aebersold** www.aebersold.com

"Congratulations on a fantastic IAJE concert in Toronto. Marvelous talent and obvious superb leadership." - **Larry Green JAZZ.FM91 91.1 in Toronto, ON, Canada**

"TSYJO smashed it!!! I think that they had the best performance and piece of the night"
- **Adrian Moody**

"You guys really lifted the roof off!" - **Chris Grieve**

"It's an honor to have both your youth band playing my music."
- **Fred Sturm/Jazz Composer** www.fredsturm.com

"What an amazing ensemble of kids you have!" **Josh - WGBO Radio**

Dear Tommy,

I'm glad it went so well in Toronto. I must also tell you this small world story. One of my dearest friends is author Kurt Dietrich, the writer responsible for the great books "Duke's Bones" and "The World of Jazz Trombone." He attended the conference without knowing my connection to you. He attended your concert and wrote to me the same day, telling me how superb your band was and to let me know that you had performed one of my charts. He got a kick out of the fact that you announced my tune as being composed by a "young American writer" which apparently got some good laughs from my buddies (I'm 56) in your audience. I, of course, loved the error in my favor!!!

Please stay in touch with me, and if you use the charts in concerts, I'd love to get a copy of your printed programs. It's an honor to have both your youth and pro bands playing my music.

Fred Sturm

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Hi Tommy

First, let me tell you what an amazing ensemble of kids you have! During the conference, I was taking press feeds from many of the venues at IAJE. I recorded these as mp3 quality only, so they are by no means hi-fidelity recordings. The mix, however, was much better than I expected. I'd be happy to send you what I have. I did not record the entire set. I'll pull them from the compact flash card (currently at home). Until then, you can find more immediate gratification on our blog. That's where you'll hear "A Night in Tunisia" - <http://www.wbgo.org/blog/?p=181>

Best,

Josh, WGBO Radio

Hi Tommy,

The Toronto trip was fantastic! It was a great experience to play at such a prestigious event as IAJE and to be around such amazing jazz musicians! Im so glad that the band got to go over there and show everyone what scottish jazz has to offer and the comments we received showed how much everyone loved it! Thanks again for another amazing experience!

Cheers,

Richard Foote (Trombone, TSYJO)

Hi Tommy,

Attending the IAJE was a great experience, giving me the opportunity to learn from and see performances by some amazing musicians. The band played exceptionally well, and drew an enthusiastic response from a large - and knowledgeable - audience. Thank you very much for arranging all this. It would be great to do something like this again sometime.

Euan Fulton (Piano, TSYJO)

The Toronto trip was a great experience. Performing to a crowd of 2000 that included some famous and respected jazz musicians was an honour. I was able to meet and listen to some of my main influences including Kenny Wheeler and Martin Taylor. The city was packed full of jazz musicians and the whole week was inspiring. It was a great experience and i am very grateful to Tommy Smith and all others who made it possible.

Danny Short (Guitar, TSYJO)

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Hi Tommy

Just thought I'd drop you an email to say thanks for such a fantastic experience at the IAJE conference in Toronto. I really appreciate you making it possible for us to do it. I know everyone feels the same way - we all really enjoyed it. To have the opportunity to play to such a large audience at such a major event is great for young musicians like me. The lessons learned from something like that can never be taught. The ability to see many great musicians perform is always important, but I was also able to meet many of them and to talk to them about music or life in general! What an amazing opportunity at this stage in our careers. And it wasn't just musicians. People from all walks of the industry were there, often doing talks or at the stalls. The opportunity to talk to these people is even rarer, so the conference was really valuable from that point of view, too.

On a slightly different note, the fact that we were able to get out there and represent Scotland was really fantastic. On top of that, it was brilliant to have the endorsement of a standing ovation from an audience full of musicians, educators and people from all over the industry. Many people I spoke to afterwards said they were completely blown away by TSYJO, but also somewhat surprised. While everyone I spoke to knew of you, of course, it was a common theme that people are unaware of the wider scene in Scotland. People I spoke to wanted to know more about jazz in Scotland and it seems the fact that a youth band could perform to this level underlined for them the strength and quality of the scene here. Not only was the conference great for us on a personal level, but I felt proud to be able to send out such a positive message about Scottish jazz.

Thanks again for an incredible experience. I'm really looking forward to playing with TSYJO again.

Best wishes

Alan Benzie (Piano, TSYJO)

The Tommy Smith Youth Jazz Orchestra's recent trip to the IAJE in Toronto was a great experience for all involved. For me, the chance to perform on the world stage in front of some of the leading names in jazz education and performance, was one I shall relish for a long time. The applause from the musicians and I received was possibly the most rapturous of my career to date. It was certainly the first time I had witnessed a standing ovation, half way through the performance.

I am proud to be a member of this orchestra which would not exist without the hard work, dedication, and financial support of Tommy Smith. Tommy gives up so much of his time to organise and rehearse the young musicians. By doing this, he has created an ensemble who have shown they can impress at an international level. I can not think of a better advertisement for Scottish jazz than the TSYJO's 45-minute set as part of the British Jazz Showcase.

Bill Fleming (Baritone, TSYJO)

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The Toronto trip with TSYJO was an excellent experience and great fun. The gig gave us the chance to play in front of a larger audience than we would find back home and meet some of Britain's best jazz musicians backstage. It gave us the chance to meet players from other countries as well: I was able to see musicians such as David Binney and David Berkman, who rarely play at home, for free. I also met a few young musicians from elsewhere at a jam session on the last night. The trip gave me the chance to get new ideas and inspiration from the many musicians and educators in the conference, I'm very glad we all had the chance to go.

Joe Wright (Tenor Saxophone, TSYJO)

Dear Tommy,

What a pleasure it was to see you at the 2008 IAJE in Toronto last week and get a rare chance for us on this side of the pond to hear your outstanding Youth Orchestra. Not only did they play their music with verve and polish, but the joy that I saw and heard in their musicianship and the camaraderie, on and off stage, is what our music is all about. The maturity and skill of the soloists, in particular, was top rate and inspired.

It's more than apparent to me now why veteran jazz artists like Joe Locke love to collaborate with them.

Best,

Tom

Tom Marcello
Manager / Joe Locke

Hi Tommy,

Thanks so much for getting us this opportunity to play during such an amazing event. I loved every moment of it, even found myself wishing for more. Suddenly we were in the midst of some of the best musicians and the planet, even standing in the hotel lift you could be in the company of Norma Winstone and Courtney Pine, the whole conference was a great experience. Not just the music but meeting the people and the musicians was fantastic. I'm sure I speak for the whole band when I say I wish I could thank you properly. The gig was fantastic, I could feel the energy coming back from the audience - there was definitely enough of them! I am proud to be part of this band and to have taken part in the conference, thanks Tommy.

Kieran McLeod (Trombone, TSYJO)

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Dear Tommy,

Let me start by saying thanks for inviting me to play with TSYJO at the IAJE in Toronto. It was a fantastic way to start the year and attending many of the incredible workshops, talks and concerts has given me enough inspiration for a long time to come. I had a fantastic time performing with all of the incredible musicians in the band.

Over the course of the five days in Canada, I had the chance to say hello to many of my drumming heroes e.g the great Jimmy Cobb (Miles Davis) and Joe Le Barbra (Bill Evans). What struck me was the fact that these "legends" are such wonderful, down to earth people! For me that is a sign of true artistry, a person who is always striving to be the best they can be yet remain secure with their abilities.

I see this quality in many members of the TSYJO. It was great to get to know many of these fine players and talk about their musical hopes and aspirations. There are many individual voices within this one group, and I hope that over the course of 2008 they are given the opportunity to fulfill their goals.

The late great Michael Brecker always said to young musicians 'Practice as much as possible, listen as much as possible and PLAY as much as possible'. Performing on a world stage with a wonderful group of Scottish musicians will remain a highlight of my career so far and I truly hope TSYJO are given many opportunities to "Play" in 2008.

Keep up the great work Tommy and all the best for 2008!

All the very best,
Alyn Cosker

Hi Tommy

Many thanks for providing this wonderful experience for Kieran and all the others in TSYJO. They obviously had a fantastic time performing in Toronto and were privileged to meet and hear some amazing world class artists there. Reading the comments you've received, it sounds like they stepped up to the mark themselves admirably which is, in no small measure, due to your support and guidance. These young folk are very lucky to have you as a role model and mentor. Hearing the mp3 of A Night in Tunisia brought a lump to my throat!

Looking forward, as ever, to the next gig

Best Regards

Emma McLeod

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Dear Tommy

I am writing to say how much I much I enjoyed the showcase performance of the Tommy Smith Youth Jazz Orchestra at the IAJE conference in Toronto.

The standard of the musicianship and the conduct of the players both during the performance and during the 4 days in Toronto was a credit to you.

I felt hugely proud to be Scottish on the night and the standing ovation from the international audience brought a tear to my eye!

Best wishes

Jill Rodger
Festival Director, Glasgow International Jazz Festival

Dear Tommy,

Thank you for the outstanding performance delivered by the TSYJO in Toronto. We were all very proud of you and your Youth Jazz Orchestra at the UK Showcase in Toronto. Personally, I found it very emotional, and yes I admit to shedding a tear or two, especially during the 2 standing ovations from the huge crowd. Indeed, the /only/ standing ovations for /any/ of the bands performing. The orchestra were well rehearsed, showed outstanding improvising skills, exuded confidence and were obviously enjoying themselves. In addition, the programme of music was challenging, inspiring and fully engaged the audience.

I'm very happy to report that, the day after the concert, the Scottish end of the UK Exhibition stand was extremely busy and there was a big demand for information on the TSYJO and you. It was great that you were there in person to talk to many of them. It seems the TSYJO stole the show! The director of the Vermont Jazz Summer School was especially keen to talk to you. He said he'd /never/ witnessed a Youth band where the improvisation skills of it's members were so high and wanted to talk to you about teaching on /his/ course. I will forward his details to you in the next few days.

In closing, I'd like to say that it is testament to /your /skills, as an educator and band leader, that the TSYJO delivered such a confident, musical performance. You are very modest and many people commented on the fact that you take absolutely none of the limelight away from the young performers on stage. You simply let them shine.

The SNJO and the TSYJO deserve to be funded year round. I would not be surprised if offers start pouring in for your services outwith Scotland Tommy. Hopefully the powers that be will have the foresight to fund what you're doing year round and keep you and your skills here in Scotland!

Best wishes
Cathie Rae, Managing Director
Thick-Skinned Productions Ltd
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www.thick-skinned.com

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Attending the IAJE was one of the highlights in my career so far. As a young musician, it was so overwhelming to be surrounded by so many sources of inspiration, and to get the chance to see, and talk to, so many fantastic musicians. It's also a very rare thing, to perform at a gig where the audience is a) so large! and b) entirely made up of people who truly appreciate the music. I feel I've gained a lot from the trip, and seeing the talent has pushed me to strive to be the best musician I can be. I am going to study jazz in the autumn, and this experience has confirmed to me that jazz is absolutely the right thing for me.

Kim Macari
(Trumpet, TSYJO)

Hi Tommy

I would just like to say thanks for providing us with the opportunity in Toronto. To represent Scotland on a world stage is a real honour, and it was an inspiration to have the chance to see and learn from some of the greats. The trip has instilled in me even more optimism about a career in music. I would love the chance to travel and perform more with this group as, in spite of the fact it is a youth band, it feels like a professional outfit and therefore provides invaluable experience for the real world.

Thanks again and Best Wishes

Ben Bryden
(Tenor Saxophone, TSYJO)

Dear Tommy

Great to see you in Toronto. Thank you for working so hard to get your band there. I know what a task it is. As I said to you in our brief conversation - such was the quality of your gig that it made me feel immensely proud to be from the UK. The band were simply superb - the solo strength quite amazing - it wasn't just notes - it was music and right in the slots too. Congratulations

With best wishes

Ian

Dr. Ian Darrington MBE
European Representative on the Board of IAJE

<mailto:ian.darrington@blueyonder.co.uk>

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Dear Tommy,

I think the main reason the TSYJO was a true high-light of the UK program during the Toronto IAJE Conference is the musicianship and individuality of the players in it. The charts were superb of course, allowing us to hear these young players, but I emphasize their individuality because, paradoxically, I think this quality is the 'signature sound' of your orchestra, rather than a collective style for which institutional bands are often commended. I hope this is a persuasive argument for funding more performances this year, i.e. it won't be the same band next year!

I have told many people how good and unique your band is and, while I certainly heard other thrilling large-ensemble performances in Toronto, I would really have missed something important if I had not heard the TSYJO. I hope sponsors appreciate the work you are doing for its high artistic merit. The band is such a credit to Scotland.

Best regards from us both,

Darius

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"Now" from Exploration is being played on BBC Radio 2 - Humphrey Lyttelton's "Best of Jazz":

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/aod/genres/jazz/aod.shtml?radio2/bestjazz>

Sunday 03 February 2008 "Hoe Down & Cottontail" BBC Radio – Northern Ireland

Tommy Smith talks about his work with young Scottish jazz musicians through his Youth Jazz Orchestra formed five years ago.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/radioulster/jazz_club/

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Dear Tommy,

I produce the breakfast show on theJazz with Mark Forrest and I thought I'd drop you a line to let you know that we will be featuring your new CD The Tommy Smith Youth Jazz Orchestra as our record of the week next week. This means at about 9.15 every day next week we will we will play a different track from the album.

If you want to let any of your fan base know or indeed the orchestra so they can tune in that would be brilliant. It will also appear on our web site <http://theJazz.com> under on the record of the week page from Monday.

Best Wishes

**Sarah
theJAZZ**

WGBO radio recording of TSYJO live

<http://www.spartacusrecords.com/Gentle%20PieceTSYJO.MP3>

<http://www.spartacusrecords.com/CottontailTSYJO.MP3>

It was great seeing and hearing the Youth Jazz Orchestra again in Toronto - I think you've really brought the ensemble together in an imaginative, and musically, it really is operating at a very high level. And the mix of youth and experience really seems to take off. However, it was almost more rewarding to see the reaction of the audience to the performance on the British night - very good indeed to have an ensemble from this side of the Atlantic take the IAJE by storm. The fact that the buzz continued throughout the week was a further indication of just how impressive the Orchestra's performance had been.

John Cumming, Serious