

Andy Milne – Pianist /Composer • Bio Release

Toronto native Andy Milne draws inspiration from various forms of music, politics, philosophy, comedy, and science fiction. Some of his musical influences include Thelonious Monk, Art Tatum, Herbie Nichols, Bela Bartok, Joni Mitchell and Stevie Wonder. A recipient of the New Works commission and the French-America Jazz Exchange grants from Chamber Music America in 2006, and voted "Rising Star Keyboardist" by Down Beat Magazine in 2004, Milne is one of the most important and respected voices in jazz today. His highly recognizable group Dapp Theory blends funk, hip-hop and jazz with seamless precision. Their current release *Layers of Chance* [ObliqSound/Contrology – 2008], features fresh compositions by Milne that blend various instrumental textures, infectious grooves, layered with lush harmonies and poignant lyrics.

In 2007 Milne released two unique piano recordings. *Dreams and False Alarms* [SongLines] features deeply considered re-workings of long-remembered pop/rock/folk/reggae classics, reaffirming and expanding Milne's creative process as a jazz improviser, while *Scenarios* [Obliqsound], an intimate duo with harmonica virtuoso Grégoire Maret, presents him in a more textural, almost cinematic series of encounters – complementary expressions of a questing musical personality.

Milne's latest collaboration, *Crystal Magnets*, pairs him with long-time friend, French pianist Benoit Delbecq. Their debut CD *Where is Pannonica?* [Songlines – 2009] uses the sonic landscape of the 5.0 surround sound format for inspiration. Composed for the medium and recorded in harmony with their environment, Milne and Delbecq exploited the unique potential for placing specific compositional elements in distinct regions of the mix. **The New York Times** lauded the recording as a "strangely beautiful new album" from two "resourcefully contemporary pianists, both drawn to quixotic interrogations of harmony and timbre."

Milne collaborated with tap dancer/choreographer Heather Cornell to create *Finding Synesthesia*, which premiered at the London Jazz Festival in November 2007. Together they combine a wide and unexpected range of sounds and influences, to integrally weave the texture and sound of tap into the instrumental ensemble.

In addition to his multiple projects, Milne tours and records with trumpeter **Ralph Alessi**, teaches at The School for Improvisational Music, and is an adjunct professor at New York University, The New School University and The Banff Centre.

In 1990, after completing an Honors degree in music at York University (where he studied with **Oscar Peterson**, **Pat LaBarbara**, and **Don Thompson**), Milne received a Canada Council grant to study at The Banff Centre. At Banff, he met saxophonist **Steve Coleman**, who encouraged Milne to move to New York. In 1991, after a year in Montreal picking up valuable sideman experience with **Joe Lovano**, **Archie Shepp**, and **Ranee Lee**, Milne moved to New York and joined Coleman's core unit Five Elements. M-BASE associates **Cassandra Wilson** and **Greg Osby** also recognized his talent and invited Milne to perform

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with their groups. The long association with Coleman offered Milne the unique opportunity to develop a completely unprecedented harmonic and rhythmic approach to the piano. The experience of responding to and complementing Coleman's unique style night after night played a major role in the development of Milne's individual approach. After six years gaining international recognition with Coleman's various projects, Milne stepped out on his own to conquer his own musical frontiers.

In 1995, Milne independently booked his band on two extensive grass roots North American tours. Following the first tour, he recorded the self-produced cassette release *The 'E' is Silent* [Contrology – 1995], featuring Gene Lake, Matthew Garrison, and Audrey Martells. In 1997, Milne recorded his debut CD, *Forward to Get Back*, [d'Note Records – 1997], which featured performances by Steve Coleman alumni, as well as two duo performances with Coleman himself.

Milne formed Dapp Theory in 1998 to "*tell passionate stories, promote peace and inspire collective responsibility towards uplifting the human spiritual condition*". The music seeks to explore the truths that exist in universal wisdom, while creatively expressing life's journeys. In 2001 Milne explored these truths in an ambitious songwriting collaboration with Canadian folk-rock icon **Bruce Cockburn** which were featured on Dapp Theory's 2003 **Concord Records** release *Y'all Just Don't Know*.

Andy Milne has established himself as a distinctive voice at the heart of New York's creative jazz scene, performing throughout the world in numerous settings, including collaborations with a range of artists including **Ravi Coltrane, Carlos Ward, Carla Cook, Sekou Sundiata, Avery Brooks, Geri Allen, Dianne Reeves, Robin Eubanks, Red Mitchell,** and **Sonny Greenwich**. His innovative rhythmic approach combined with his extensive harmonic lexicon place him at the forefront of young pianists poised to carry on the lineage of creative masters like **Herbie Hancock** and **McCoy Tyner**.

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