

Howie Smith Biography

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"... idiosyncratic, high-flying saxophone playing." (Sydney Morning Herald)

"... a highly distinctive voice, whose free solos have a strong melodic progression and an insinuating rhythmic feeling." (London Jazz Journal)

"... an electrifying and versatile soloist." (New York Times)

"... a rawly, emotional voice." (Cadence)

"Howie Smith's alto and soprano playing remains instantly recognizable. If empty virtuosity is the great blight of jazz, the combination of virtuosity with vitality and imagination is one of its boons. Smith has these qualities in abundance." (Sydney Morning Herald)



A virtuoso saxophonist and composer, Howie Smith does not easily fit into a single category. As a performer he has worked with musicians, organizations and composers as diverse as Lester Bowie, John Cage, the Cleveland Orchestra, Mark Dresser, Iron Toys, Mike Nock, Elvis Presley, Clark Terry, and the Tone Road Ramblers. His recorded performances range from the big bands of Phil Wilson and Frank Mantooth to the Australian quartet Jazz Co/Op to saxophone concertos by David Baker, Salvatore Martirano and Edward Miller. He has also presented numerous concerts and workshops throughout the United States, Canada, South America, Europe and Australia.

His catalogue of compositions includes works for conventional big bands and combos; for string, wind and percussion ensembles; for electronics; and for mixed media. Recordings of his work may be heard on the Albany, New World Records, Philips Phonogram, Polydor, and Sea Breeze labels, and his music for jazz ensembles is available through the Doug Beach/Kjos, Kendor Music Inc., and Otama Music. He has received two Fulbright grants, was awarded the Cleveland Arts Prize for Music in 1985, and has been the recipient of an Individual Artist Fellowship from the Ohio Arts Council on seven different occasions. He has twice served as co-chair of both the Jazz Fellowships and the Music Overview panels of the National Endowment for the Arts, and has been associated with Yamaha as an artist/clinician since 1971.

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