About the Artist

Taylor Barnett is a trumpeter, composer, and educator based in Richmond, Virginia. He is an Assistant Professor of Music at Virginia Commonwealth University and is a member of No BS! Brass, as well as the leader of his own jazz groups. Barnett earned a B.M. in Jazz studies and and M.M. in Trumpet performance at Virginia Commonwealth University, and a D.M.A. in Performance, Pedagogy, and Literature at James Madison University.

Barnett has performed as a trumpet soloist at the Monterey Jazz Festival, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Eaux Claires Fest, Festival d'été de Québec, Festival of New Trumpet Music, and on NPR’s Tiny Desk Concert as well as with artists such as Bon Iver, Woody Herman Orchestra, Dave Douglas, Gladys Knight, The Temptations, and Frankie Avalon.

He is a member of Sazli-Çazli, a collaborative project between Turkish and American musicians incorporating modern jazz elements into traditional Turkish folk songs. The U.S. Embassy in Ankara has sponsored the ensemble in more than a dozen concerts and workshops across Turkey in 2015 and 2016, with performances attended by U.S. Ambassador John Bass and other U.S. and Turkish officials.

Barnett is the lead teaching artist for the Lullaby Project, a partnership between Carnegie Hall, VCU Music, and VCU Health that pairs musicians with at-risk pregnant mothers to facilitate the composition and recording of an original lullaby for their babies. He has also served as the Artistic Director and conductor for A Richmond Big Band Christmas, which raised several thousand dollars to benefit local charities that provide healthcare and educational opportunities to the under-served.

As a composer/arranger, Barnett’s work is published by UNC Jazz Press and has been commissioned by the Richmond Symphony and artists such as Darryl Harper and Rex Richardson. His large-ensemble arrangements have been performed at international music festivals in Australia, Portugal, China, and all across the United States.
Program

All compositions by Taylor Barnett

For Now
Windswept
Cannon=Law
2 For One
On the Zone

with Alan Parker, guitar, Randall Pharr, bass,
and Emre Kartari, drums

— Intermission —

Suspended Before the Steps
For Kenny
Red Lines
The Other Side (with the green grass...)
2 For One
Remember the Future

with Marcus Tenney, tenor saxophone, Cameron Ralston, bass,
and Devonne Harris, drums

About the Album

"Two Quartets: 2 For One" is an exploration of the compositional and arranging possibilities for jazz quartet. In general, the long tradition of jazz quartets falls into two categories of instrumentation:

- Single horn or voice + rhythm section (e.g. John Coltrane Quartet)
- Two horns + bass and drums (e.g. Gerry Mulligan/Chet Baker Quartet, Ornette Coleman Quartet)

These two permutations of the quartet each offer particular opportunities and challenges for an arranger. The single horn + guitar, bass, drums quartet offers more chordal possibilities, due to the greater number of pitches that can be played simultaneously. Pieces such as "For Now" and "On the Zone" are harmonically driven and generally homophonic in texture (melody with accompaniment).

The two horn + bass and drums quartet lends itself to contrapuntal writing, with the trumpet and saxophone able to play two independent lines over the bass. "The Other Side" is a good example of this type of writing. The challenge for this instrumentation is to invoke a sense of harmonic fullness, with only three pitches at any time, which "For Kenny" (dedicated to the late British flugelhornist/composer Kenny Wheeler) exemplifies.

To drive home the distinction between the two quartets, I recorded the blues "2 For One" with both groups. The guitar quartet played the tune more slowly, with plunger-muted trumpet, and the guitar playing harmonic accompaniment. The two horn quartet recorded the tune much faster, and I wrote a tenor sax counterline, inspired by Thelonious Monk's cheeky use of dissonance.

This album was recorded in two back-to-back days, by Lance Koehler. He embraced the challenge of capturing and highlighting the unique sound of each quartet, while also crafting a unified and complementary sound between the two groups.

Taylor Barnett, October 2019