



DR. JONATHAN SARAGA

"Jonathan Saraga is an excellent player with a lot to say and the means to say it very well."

-Gary Mortenson, International Trumpet Guild

Trumpeter | Flugelhornist | Composer | Arranger | Educator | Producer | Doctor of Musical Arts
www.jonathansaraga.com | jonathan@jonathansaraga.com | (347) 574-2003

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SELECTED QUOTES

"His chops, lust for musical life and don't-box-me-into-a-stylistic-corner mentality make him seem like the musical offspring of trumpeters Dave Douglas and Ambrose Akinmusire."

-Dan Bilawsky, *All About Jazz*

"I have long been an admirer of Jonathan's musicianship, both as an excellent instrumentalist and a thoughtful, creative jazz improviser. Jonathan embodies what I feel is the best approach to modern jazz music: a thorough grounding in the rich tradition of the music coupled with a restless, searching spirit that seeks to express the music of now."

-Jimmy Greene

"I love hearing Jonathan Saraga play! He's a gifted jazz improviser with roots in the tradition, ears in the present moment, and eyes to the future."

-John Swana

"With a fresh approach to trumpet playing and improvisation, the emerging original voice of Jonathan Saraga is one that is indeed worthy of our attention."

-Todd Coolman

"Jonathan is a top-notch player. I have no doubt that he will be among the best players of his generation. He possesses the necessary ability both as a trumpeter and a musician to lead the way forward in the jazz community. When I listen to new young player, I look for a someone who has a progressive style that is anchored in the tradition of the music. Jonathan already fits that model."

-Scott Wendholt

"Jonathan Saraga has everything he needs to be a vital part of a new wave of trumpet players: Soul, intelligence, great technique and acute musical awareness. It's all here, in the unique writing and the inventive playing. Dig it!"

-Jim Rotondi

"Jonathan Saraga has been, from the first time I heard him play in 2005, a force. I never heard him take a solo, write a piece of music or, for that matter, have a conversation that wasn't pointed, serious and coming from a place of curiosity, interest and resolve. As a result, he has blossomed into an artist of real depth and the even better news is his relative youth -- who knows what he has yet to realize!"

-Pete Malinverni

"Every note, phrase, dynamic, articulation and small nuance comes from his inner being and is effortlessly presented to his listeners with in a purely creative performance."

-Bruce Chidester, *The Trumpet Blog*

"Jonathan always manages to tell a story when he plays...every time I hear [him,] he is reaching for something new."

-Stephen Haynes

"Rising jazz superstar"

-Elicit Magazine

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LEADER DISCOGRAPHY

FIRST VISION

Label: Blue Truffle Music LLC

Recorded and Mastered at the Cutting Room Studios in New York, NY on January 8th, 2012

All Compositions by Jonathan Saraga

All artwork by Jonathan Saraga

Produced by Jonathan Saraga

Jonathan Saraga – trumpet/flugelhorn

Colin Gordon- alto saxophone

Peter Park – guitar

Jeff Dingler – bass

Gusten Rudolph – drums

"...a skillfully conceived and exquisitely realized debut that brings to mind the edgy, envelope-pushing hard bop of many a Blue Note record in the early 1960s." - ALL ABOUT JAZZ

"...a rare blend of individuality and maturity." - ALL ABOUT JAZZ

"The music, all Saraga-penned, has an uncommon freshness coming from a 24-year-old artist who is well on his way to forming his own compositional voice." - ALL ABOUT JAZZ

"First Vision isn't the stuff of amateurs on the brink of musical maturity, it's a stand-up-and-take-notice offering." - ALL ABOUT JAZZ

"First Vision shouldn't be measured as a debut; it deserves to be judged only on its bountiful merits, which include stellar trumpet work, intriguing tunes and strong group chemistry." - ALL ABOUT JAZZ

"At times, Saraga's music can exhibit a wandering, nomadic, Klezmer-influenced sound that further cements the (Dave) Douglas connection via that trumpeter's work with John Zorn's flagship Masada." - ALL ABOUT JAZZ

"An excellent debut recording as a leader for Jonathan Saraga. Highly creative playing and writing throughout the CD, all done within a strong and fresh ensemble concept." - JON GORDON

"Jonathan has always impressed me and this recording helps lay a foundation for what I know will be a great career. Check it out!" - SCOTT WENDHOLT

"Jon's new recording is a splendid collection of originals which features some fine young musicians." - CHARLES BLENZIG

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LEADER DISCOGRAPHY

JOURNEY TO A NEW WORLD

label: Fresh Sound/New Talent

Recorded at Peter Karl Studios in New York City, NY on November 25th, 2015.

Mastered by Dave Darlington.

Jonathan Saraga - trumpet/compositions/arrangements

Remy Le Boeuf - alto saxophone

Aki Ishiguro - guitar

Chris Pattishall - piano/rhodes

Rick Rosato - bass

Kenneth Salters - drums

"Saraga is obviously very aware of the direction of jazz in his hometown of New York..." -
JAZZWISE (UK)

"There are no weak links in this band" -SEA OF TRANQUILITY

"The music pulls from its astonishing maturity and its capacity to suggest a singular experience but open and appropriate enough for the listener." -JAZZ MAGAZINE (FRANCE)

"familiar but also fresh; grounded but also hopeful." -DEBBIE BURKE

"assertive", "sharp line-up", "inventive" -JAZZWISE (UK)

"Embodying a deft compositional approach and some first-rate musicianship, Saraga's Journey is just that: an opportunity to discover and explore some exciting musical territory, with a skilled and adventurous leader as a guide." -ALL ABOUT JAZZ

"A very focused and well-conceived album by Jonathan and his crew. His compositions display great personality and poise, with everyone in the band finding ways to channel the current sounds of modern jazz, using their various influences as a platform to delve into their own musical personalities." -MIGUEL ZENON

"Saraga is a trumpeter with a singular vision that is motherloaded by a creative force but isn't a slave to it." - MIDWEST RECORD

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VIDEO

FULL LENGTH VIDEOS



<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLp5cCR6DTsXzi9xIjAwX44M-UL-FB4Qo>

LONGER CLIPS



<https://www.jonathansaraga.com/video>

SHORTER CLIPS



<https://www.instagram.com/jonathansaraga/>

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AUDIO

STUDIO ALBUMS



<https://open.spotify.com/artist/36oFQeQU0U9QWqtFJ6c0aT>



<https://music.apple.com/us/artist/jonathan-saraga/1100858219>

LIVE ALBUMS



<https://jonathansaragamusic.bandcamp.com/>

SINGLES



<https://soundcloud.com/jonathansaraga>

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PHOTOS



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DR. JONATHAN SARAGA

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Jonathan Saraga is a trumpeter, flugelhornist, composer, arranger, producer, educator and Doctor of Musical Arts based in New York City.

His trumpet playing earned him first place in the 2007 International Trumpet Guild Jazz Trumpet Solo Competition and the opportunity to compete as one of 5 finalists in the 2009 Carmine Caruso International Jazz Trumpet Solo Competition. He has received a total of 2 DownBeat Student Music Awards, one in the 2020 Outstanding Performance Undergraduate Category for Latin Group and one in the 2021 Graduate College Outstanding Arrangements for Small Ensemble category. He was also 1 of 2 finalists to compete for both the U.S. Navy Band Commodores' and U.S. Air Force Academy Band's jazz/commercial trumpet vacancies in 2021.

Saraga's composing and arranging work has earned him many accolades as well, including finalist status in the 2019 Chamber Music America New Jazz Works grant competition, semi-finalist status in the 2021 Unsigned Only Music Competition (12% of 10,000 entries), 5 semi-finalist nominations in the International Songwriting Competition over 2 consecutive years (2016 and 2017), as well as an honorable mention selection in the 2017 competition (1% of 16,000 entries). He was among 19 up-and-coming jazz composers selected from a global pool to receive a Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award in 2016, among 16 to receive a commission from the International Society of Jazz Arrangers and Composers in 2020, and among 30 selected to participate in the 2020 and 2021 BMI Jazz Composers Workshops. In 2023, he earned finalist status in the Amsonia & Hermes Music International Composition Contest, and in 2024, was commissioned by the Keio Light Music Society of Japan to compose a jazz orchestra arrangement for their annual Yamano Big Band Contest held in Tokyo. In 2025, he was 1 of 3 composers selected to present their work at the Jazz Gallery's Jazz Composers Showcase series. In 2026, he was named a finalist in both the John Lennon International Songwriting Contest and the Petrichor Records International Music Competition.

Jonathan's overall musicianship earned him invitations to 2 internationally selective intensive programs, one being the 2011 School for Improvisational Music's Summer Intensive and the other being the 2015 Banff Center's Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music. It also earned him participation in internationally selective residency programs, including the 2019 Banff Early Fall Musicians in Residence program, the 2021 Chashama chaNorth Artist in Residence program, and the 2026 Cortona Sessions for New Music, where he was selected as a Resident Artist. Additional residency-related accolades include making the finals in the 2021 Haleakala National Park Artist in Residence program and being placed on the waitlist for the Millay Colony for the Arts Core Residency program for the second half of 2021. His musicianship also earned him the opportunity to pursue a 3-year Doctor of Musical Arts degree with a full scholarship and paid instructorship from 2016–2019, selection by the Recording Academy for its New York Chapter in 2022, and participation in a GRAMMY-winning album, Bianca Reimagined by the Dan Pugach Big Band, in 2025.

Saraga has also garnered accolades as a teaching artist and was selected to present at the International Society for Improvised Music conference at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music in Melbourne, Australia, and at the Association for Popular Music Education conference at Edinburgh Napier University in Scotland, both in 2020. He was also invited to present his research at the Jazz Education Network's annual conference in 2024 and has received grants from United States Artists, the University of Colorado Boulder, the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation, the Actors Fund/Local 802 Musicians Union, the Jazz Foundation of America, the Afro-Latin Jazz Alliance, and the Recording Academy/MusiCares. Dr. Saraga has appeared on 30 studio albums, including 2 under his own name for the Blue Truffle Music and Fresh Sound record labels, and can be heard or seen in over 250 YouTube videos. His scholarly work has engaged with individuals in over 500 cities, nearly 70 countries and just short of 100 different universities worldwide, and he has been actively performing, recording and teaching throughout Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, Canada and the U.S. since 2006.

Some of the notable groups he has played with include the Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra, the Miguel Zenon Big Band, Darcy James Argue's Secret Society, the Birdland Big Band, the Jon Faddis Big Band, the John Pizzarelli Big Band, the Mingus Big Band, Orrin Evans' Captain Black Big Band, the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, the Jimmy Greene Big Band, Remy Le Boeuf's Assembly of Shadows Orchestra, the Terraza Big Band, the Josh Evans Big Band, the David Berger Big Band, the Valery Ponomarev Big Band, the Emilio Solla Jazz Orchestra, the Steven Feifke Big Band, Manuel Valera's New Cuban Express Big Band, the Jason Marshall Big Band, the Dan Pugach Big Band featuring Nicole Zuraitis, the BMI Jazz Orchestra, the Samuel Torres Big Band, the Sam Blakeslee Large Group, the Miho Hazama Jazz Orchestra, the Jihye Lee Jazz Orchestra, the Migiwa Miyajima Jazz Orchestra and Brass Against, as well as ensembles led by Zee Avi, Erich Bergen, Tyshawn Sorey, Steve Coleman and Henry Cole.

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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

TRUMPET COMPETITIONS

U.S. Air Force Academy Band jazz/commercial trumpet vacancy auditions – Finalist (1 of 2 candidates) (2021)
U.S. Navy Band Commodores jazz trumpet vacancy (Washington DC, Washington) – Finalist (1 of 2) (2021)
GRAMMY-winning Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra's 4th trumpet chair auditions – Finalist (1 of 3) (2020)
Carmine Caruso International Jazz Trumpet Solo Competition – Finalist (1 of 5) (2009)
International Trumpet Guild Jazz Trumpet Solo Competition – Winner (2007))

COMPOSITION COMPETITIONS

John Lennon International Songwriting Contest — Finalist (2026)
Petrichor Records International Music Competition — Finalist (2026)
Amsonia & Hermes Music International Composition Contest – Finalist (2026)
BMI Jazz Composers Workshop – Selected Participant (2021)
Unsigned Only Music Competition – Semi-Finalist (2021)
Chamber Music America's New Jazz Works grant competition – Finalist (2019)
International Songwriting Competition – Winner/Honorable Mention/Finalist (2017)
International Songwriting Competition – Semi-Finalist (2017)
ASCAP Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award – Winner (2016)
International Songwriting Competition – Semi-Finalist (2016)

GRANTS

Chamber Music America *New Jazz Works* (2026)
United States Artists (2020)
University of Colorado Boulder Music Advisory Board (2020)
Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation (2020)
The Actors Fund/Local 802 Musicians Union (2020)
The Jazz Foundation of America (2020)
The Afro-Latin Jazz Alliance (2020)
The Recording Academy/MusiCares (2020)

COMMISSIONS

Keio Light Music Society (Tokyo, Japan) (2024)
International Society of Jazz Arrangers and Composers (2020)

RESIDENCIES

Cortona Sessions for New Music (Ede, Netherlands)
Chashama chaNorth Summer Residency program (Hudson Valley, NY) (2021)
Millay Colony for the Arts Core Residency (Hudson Valley, NY) – Waitlist (2021)
Haleakala National Park Artist in Residence program (Maui, Hawaii) – Finalist (2021)
Banff Early Fall Musicians in Residence program (Alberta, CA) (2019)
Banff International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music (Alberta, CA) (2015)
•School for Improvisational Music Summer Intensive Program (New York, NY) (2011)

CONFERENCES

Jazz Education Network 16th Annual Conference (Atlanta, Georgia) – Selected Presenter (2025)
Association for Popular Music Education conference (Edinburgh Napier University – Edinburgh, Scotland) – Selected Presenter (2020)
International Society for Improvised Music conference (Melbourne Conservatorium of Music – Australia) – Selected Presenter (2020)

OTHER AWARDS/ACHIEVEMENTS

The Dan Pugach Big Band – GRAMMY-Winning Band Member, Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album (2025)
Jazz Composers Showcase at The Jazz Gallery (New York, NY) – Selected Composer (1 of 3) (2025)
2022: Recording Academy Member Class of 2022 – Selected Member
2021: Downbeat Student Music Award (Outstanding Arrangement, Small Ensemble, Undergraduate Category) - Winner/Recipient
2020: Downbeat Student Music Award (Outstanding Performance, Latin Group, Undergraduate Category) – Winner/Recipient

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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

RECORDINGS AS A SIDEMAN

2017: "Journey to a New World" (Fresh Sound Records, LLC)
2012/2015: "First Vision" (Blue Truffle Music, LLC)

RECORDINGS AS A SIDEMAN

2024: HyeSong Hong Big Band *Things Will Pass*, 2024: Marc Jazz *Emergence*, 2024: Philip Ellis Foster *The Cosmos Project*, 2024: Julia Keefe *The Mildred Bailey Project*, 2024: Sue Jin *Last Sunset*, 2023: Azimuth A.D. *Mereyside*, 2023: Dana Athens *Crush*, 2023: Erica Seguire/Shannon Baker Jazz Orchestra *The New Day Bends Light*, Tony Max, *Love Yourself* (2022), Real Stormin' Norman *Euphoria* (2021), terrance peng *Bears May Try to Share Your Lunch* (2021), Consoul *Lonestar* (2021), Craig Shepard *Trumpet City* (2021), Alex Heffron *Looking Out* (2021), Gary Fogel LagTet *It is What it Is* (2019), Noah Barker *Business Actual* (2017), Eric Block *Spanish Island* (2016), Eco-Music Big Band *Rebel Spirits* (2016), The Oatmeal Jazz Combo *Instant Oats* (2016), Eco-Music Big Band *Colors of Resistance* (2016), Afro Peruvian New Trends Orquesta *Uniting Beats (Ritmos Que Unen)* (2016), Ece Moisson *Gelmissin* (2015), Wynn Valent *With Friends from Here and There* (2014), Oatmeal Jazz Combo *Steel Cut Oats* (2013), Math of Trees *The Gears Below* (2012), Western Sky Music *Stations* (2012), Do La Mizik *New York Time* (2012), System Band *Se Nou'k Kon'n Fe'l* (2012), Mr. Breakdown *Shake Daddy Jupiter* (2011), Shedly Abraham *7th Step* (2011), The New York Korean Jazz Orchestra *The First Step* (2012), Helix Kweentet *Helix* (2010), Rafrechi *Jwet La Bel Nan Min'w* (2010), Charlie Philips *Charlie Phillips* (2009), Captain Coconut *Everybody's Business* (2009), International Trumpet Guild *The Roads They've Taken: Winners of the ITG Conference Student Jazz Improvisation Competition*, 1979-2008 (2008); Doug Ratner *Surviving the City* (2006)

NOTABLE PERFORMANCE VENUES AS LEADER

St. Peter's Church (NYC) Caribbean International Jazz Festival (Les Cayes, Haiti)
Cornelia St. Café (NYC), The Douglas St. Music Collective (NYC), Seeds (NYC), The Bar Next Door (NYC), The Shapeshifter Lab (NYC), iBeam (NYC), Festival of New Trumpet Music (NYC), Dazzle (CO), Smalls Jazz Club (NYC), Jazz at the Kitano (NYC), Soapbox Gallery (NYC)

NOTABLE PERFORMANCE VENUES AS SIDEMAN

The Barclays Center (NYC), St. Peter's Church (NYC), Le Poisson Rouge (NYC), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC), Carnegie Hall (NYC), National Arts Club (NYC), Symphony Space (NYC), NYU Skirball Theater (NYC), The Stone (NYC), The Cutting Room (NYC), Alice Tully Hall (NYC), The Jazz Gallery (NYC), Roulette (NYC), Joe's Pub (NYC), Rose Hall (NYC), Putra Indoor Stadium (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), The Blue Note (NYC), The Jazz Standard (NYC), Rockefeller Center (NYC), Birdland (NYC), Jazz at the Kitano (NYC), Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola (NYC), Fat Cat (NYC), Zinc Bar (NYC), The Hotel New Yorker (NYC), the Apollo Theater (NYC), Smalls Jazz Club (NYC), Smoke Jazz Club (NYC), The Painted Bride (MA), Bicentennial Park (Miami, FL), St. Peter's Church (NYC), The Performing Arts Center (Purchase, NY), Ornithology (NYC), The Douglas St. Music Collective (NYC), Spirits (Miami, FL), Sullivan Hall (NYC), the Apollo Theater (NYC), Firehouse Space (NYC), Chris' Jazz Club (PA)

FESTIVAL APPEARANCES

Caribbean International Jazz Festival (Haiti) – As Leader, Cadence Jazz Festival (NY) – As Leader, Peekskill Jazz Festival (NY) – As Leader, Jazz on the Plaza Jazz Festival (NY) – As Leader, COTA Jazz Festival (PA), Lake George Jazz Festival (NY), Branford on the Green Jazz Festival (NY), The Blue Note Jazz Festival (NY), Rochester Jazz Festival (NY), Albany Jazz Festival (NY), Anugerah Industri Muzik Awards (Malaysia), Kompa Music Festival (FL/Paris), Festival of New Trumpet Music (NY), Ann Arbor Music Festival (MI)

THEATRE

Theaterly.com – recording session work, Drowsy Chaperone - Riverdale Rising Stars, Anything Goes - AfterWork Theatre, The Wild Party - New Studio on Broadway, Sweet Charity - New Harlem Arts Theater, Damn Yankees - Way-Off Broadway Productions (National Tour), Guys and Dolls - LaGuardia High School production, LaGuardia High School

REVIEWS

4/4 Stars Recommended – Jazzwise UK (Tony Hall), Journey to a New World, 2017, 4/5 Stars – All About Jazz (Troy Dostert), Journey to a New World, 2017, 4/5 Stars – Jazz Journal (Brian Morton), Journey to a New World, 2017, 4.5/5 Stars – ModernJazz.gr (Imitonios), Journey to a New World, 2017, 3.5/4 Stars - Audiophile Audition (Fritz Balwit) - Journey to a New World, 2017, 4/4 Stars – Sea of Tranquility (Jon Neudorf), Journey to a New World, 2017, 4/5 Stars – All About Jazz (Dan Bilawsky), First Vision, 2012, 4/5 Stars – All About Jazz (Dan McClenaghan), First Vision, 2012, 4/5 Stars – All About Jazz (Hrayr Attarian), First Vision, 2012

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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

NOTABLE ARTISTIC HIGHLIGHTS AS A TRUMPETER

Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra – The Jazz Standard
Mingus Big Band – The Jazz Standard
Steve Coleman Large Ensemble
Miguel Zenon Big Band – The Jazz Gallery
Darcy James Argue's Secret Society
Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra – Birdland
Tyshawn Sorey Group – The Met Brewer, The Stone
John Pizzarelli Big Band – Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center (Great Barrington, MA)
Jon Faddis Jazz Orchestra – Dizzy's Club
Soloist on album, Bianca Reimagined by Dan Pugach Big Band
Dan Pugach Big Band feat. Nicole Zuraitis – Birdland, Jazz Loft, COTA Jazz Festival, The Deerhead Inn, Lake George Jazz Fest
Flugelhorn solo on Bianca Reimagined by Dan Pugach Big Band feat. Nicole Zuraitis
Miho Hazama Jazz Orchestra (Jazz Composers Showcase) – The Jazz Gallery
Macedonian National Jazz Orchestra (Macedonia)
Orrin Evans' Captain Black Big Band – Smoke
Remy Le Boeuf's Assembly of Shadows Orchestra – The Jazz Gallery, Roulette
Manuel Valera Big Band – The Django, Terraza 7
Jimmy Greene Big Band – Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola
Emilio Solla Big Band – Lake George Jazz Festival
Steven Feifke Big Band – The Django
Miles Davis Centennial Tribute Concert – Jazz Vespers Series at St. Peter's Church
Birdland Big Band – Birdland
Jihye Lee Jazz Orchestra – Shapeshifter Lab, Birdland, The Jazz Gallery, The Times Center
Samuel Torres Big Band – Terraza 7, Zinc Bar
BMI Jazz Orchestra – Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, Symphony Space
Terraza Big Band – Terraza 7
Migiwa Miyajima Jazz Orchestra – Shapeshifter Lab
HyeSong Hong Big Band – Birdland, The Jazz Loft
Ben Markley Big Band feat. Ari Hoenig – Birdland Jazz Club
Recorded on EP featuring the United States Army Field Band and Soldier's Chorus
Brass Against – Southern Tours, Le Poisson Rouge
David Berger Big Band – Swing 46
Valery Ponomarev Big Band – Zinc Bar
Eco-Music Big Band (as lead trumpeter) – Carnegie Hall
Djakout Mizik – The Barclays Center
Zee Avi – AIM Awards – Putra World Tower (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
Damjan Pejcinowski Group – The Four Seasons Resort (Maldives)
Bijan Mortazari & Mazyar Fallahi – Tilles Performing Arts Center
Jason Marshall Big Band – Minton's Playhouse
Sam Blakeslee Big Band – Shapeshifter Lab
Josh Evans Big Band – Smalls Jazz Club
Erich Bergen (as lead trumpeter) – Birdland
Performances of original music by Keio Light Music Society (Tokyo, Japan)
World Premiere of Trumpet City by Craig Shepard (as ensemble player) – Festival of New Trumpet Music
Festival of New Trumpet Music World Premiere of Henry Brant's Flight Over a Global Map (as ensemble player) – Roulette
National Off-Broadway Tour of Damn Yankees (as lead trumpeter)

OTHER NOTABLE ARTISTIC HIGHLIGHTS

2024: Performances of original music by Keio Light Music Society (Tokyo, Japan)
2022: Work cited in Sammy Stein's book, The Wonder of Jazz (Independent Publishing Network)
2022: Featured Performer/Composer for Composers Now Festival Virtual Opening Event
2018: Headlining artist for the 1st ever Caribbean International Jazz Festival – Gelee Beach (Les Cayes, Haiti)

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“Jonathan is a real improviser and has the technique to express his ideas fluently and with heart.”

- Scott Lee