

"One of the most powerful and appealing jazz units currently active."

-All About Jazz



Photo by Daniel Sheehan/EyeShotJazz.com

# EMPTY CAGE QUARTET

The **Empty Cage Quartet** has been consistently praised by critics as one of the most interesting and original new jazz groups to emerge from the American West Coast. For nearly a decade the group has explored new ways to integrate a diverse mix of musical influences ranging from shuffle swing to free jazz blowouts, minimalist percussion loops to complex modernist gestures, funky stomps, odd-meter marches, robotic grooves, heavy rock, and nearly everything in between. Their seventh CD *Gravity* is out now on the Clean Feed label.

Contact: 917-434-4930 or [emptycagequartet@yahoo.com](mailto:emptycagequartet@yahoo.com)

[WWW.EMPTYCAGEQUARTET.COM](http://WWW.EMPTYCAGEQUARTET.COM)

# BIOGRAPHIES

**JASON MEARS**, from Alaska, is a saxophonist, clarinetist, composer, improviser, and educator who is currently living in New York City. He holds a BFA in Music Education from Boston University and a MFA in African-American Improvisational Music from California Institute of the Arts. Jason has studied with Wadada Leo Smith, Leroy Jenkins, Harvey Pittel, Donald Sinta, John Sampen, and Vinny Golia. As well as being a member of the highly acclaimed Empty Cage Quartet, Jason's most recent projects include Anthony Braxton's Trillium E Orchestra, Wadada Leo Smith's Silver Orchestra, and Harris Eisenstadt's Canada Day Octet. He has performed with Wadada Leo Smith, Vinny Golia, Anthony Braxton, Frank Gratkowski, Phillip Greenlief, Angelica Sanchez, Leroy Jenkins, Nate Wooley, Ken Filliano, Jeb Bishop, Jason Roebke, Jeff Parker, Mike Pride, Harris Eisenstadt, and Reuben Radding among many others. Jason has recorded on the Clean Feed, Nine Winds, 482, No Business, and pfMENTUM labels.

**KRIS TINER** is a California-based trumpet player, composer, and improviser. Featured on NPR Music as one of five new trumpet voices impacting modern music, he has been described as "*extraordinarily inventive*" (Signal to Noise), and "*a really compelling voice*" (Cadence Magazine). Incorporating ideas from various fields of psychological and transpersonal inquiry, Tiner's compositions explore connections between improvisational world music traditions and systemic compositional practices, blending deep jazz roots with references to many diverse streams of contemporary and experimental music. Tiner's music has been performed on five continents, his 40+ CD recordings have been enthusiastically reviewed in the international jazz press, and he has been recognized with awards from ASCAP, the American Composers Forum, Chamber Music America, IAJE, and the John F. Kennedy Center. Tiner collaborates with New York guitarist Mike Baggetta in the duo Tin/Bag, and is a regular member of the Industrial Jazz Group. He has also collaborated with Vinny Golia, Wadada Leo Smith, Leroy Jenkins, Donald Robinson, Gerry Hemingway, Nels Cline, Kraig Grady, Tatsuya Nakatani, Ken Filiano, Jeff Kaiser, Taylor Ho Bynum, G.E. Stinson, Chris Schlarb, Motoko Honda, Harris Eisenstadt, Phillip Greenlief, and Lukas Ligeti. He holds an MFA in African-American Improvisational Music from California Institute of the Arts and a BA in Music from CSU Bakersfield. Tiner has lectured on both music and visual art, and currently directs the jazz program and teaches courses in jazz and American popular music at Bakersfield College.

**PAUL KIKUCHI** is a percussionist, composer, and sound artist from Indianola, WA. After playing in rock bands as a youth, Paul went on to study music at Bennington College (BFA) and California Institute of the Arts (MFA). He currently works as a musician and educator in Seattle, WA. Paul is involved in a wide variety of musical projects, ranging from percussion ensembles to experimental jazz quartets. Much of his work focuses on site-specific performances and recordings in unique acoustic environments such as abandoned train tunnels, nuclear cooling towers, underground cisterns, and historic train stations. He also constructs instruments that are utilized in his various projects, such as Portable Sanctuary, a Seattle-based group that he leads. Paul is the founder and artistic director of Prefecture Records, a small label that supports percussionist-led projects and music created in/unusual acoustic environments and found and invented instruments. As a music educator Paul has taught at West Sound Academy, The American International School of Budapest, the Oakwood School (Los Angeles) and the Community Arts Partnership (Los Angeles). He is currently audio faculty at the Art Institute of Seattle, and also works with youth at The Wing Luke Museum and Jack Straw Productions in Seattle. Paul's work as a musician and composer has been recognized and supported by Seattle's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs, 4 culture, Artist Trust, Chamber Music America, the American Composer's Forum, the Jack Straw Foundation, and the Montalvo Center for the Arts, among others. He has been featured in publications such as the Earshot Jazz Magazine and the International Examiner.

**IVAN JOHNSON**, is a bassist and composer from Los Angeles, He completed his BFA degree at California Institute of the Arts in 2003, where he studied contrabass with Charlie Haden, Darek Oles, and Peter Rofe; arranging and composition with Michael Pisaro, Marc Lowenstein and Mark Menzies; and Baroque music with Allen Vogel and Tisha Goldstein. Ivan has performed throughout the United States with an eclectic group of ensembles, and made his solo debut at the 2003 Athens Music Festival in Athens, Georgia. As a musician on the progressive music scene he has premiered compositions by Marc Lowenstein, Vinny Golia, Mark Menzies, Anne LeBaron, Michael Pisaro, and James Tenney. Ivan's current projects include the Lian Ensemble - a classical Persian group which stretches the boundaries of traditional Iranian music, Dark Wing which plays a unique blend of world music using free improvisation and original compositions for marimba, string bass, tar, setar, ney and a variety of percussion instruments, and the Nate Lapointe Band - a rootsy eclectic songwriting and improvising group. Ivan is head of the jazz program at Oakwood High School in Los Angeles, and he co-founded the Academy of Creative Music. Recently Mr. Johnson was the Assistant Music Director for the world premiere of the critically acclaimed opera *The Peach Blossom Fan* working closely with Stephin Merritt from the Magnetic fields, and he has been an Artist In Residence at Stanford University performing music by Brian Ferneyhough and Mark Applebaum. Ivan recently premiered his own opera *Lucid Dreams* with composer Ethan Gruska.

# PERFORMANCE HISTORY

## 2002

Rocco, Hollywood, CA  
California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA

## 2003

Club Fais Do Do, Los Angeles, CA  
CSU Bakersfield, Bakersfield, CA  
SIMM Series, San Francisco, CA  
Tugboat Brewing Co., Portland, OR  
The Rendezvous, Seattle, WA  
1067 Granville, Vancouver, B.C.  
KEXP Sonarchy Radio, Seattle, WA  
California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA  
Borders, Bakersfield, CA  
Other Ideas at The Space, San Diego, CA  
Mat Bevel Institute, Tucson, AZ  
R.B. Winning Coffeehouse, Albuquerque, NM  
KUNM, Albuquerque, NM  
All Points Gallery, Taos, NM  
Dazzle Restaurant & Lounge, Denver, CO  
Club Fais Do Do, Los Angeles, CA

## 2004

The Academy of Creative Music, Los Angeles, CA  
Dagny's Coffee Co., Bakersfield, CA  
D.J.'s Loft, Los Angeles, CA  
Borders, Palo Alto, CA  
21 Grand, Oakland, CA  
Mateel Summer Arts Festival, Garberville, CA  
Holocene, Portland, OR  
Le Voyeur, Olympia, WA  
Polestar Music Gallery, Seattle, WA  
The Upstage, Port Townsend, WA

## 2005

Oakwood School, Los Angeles, CA  
KBAK TV 29 - Daybreak, Bakersfield, CA  
Zebulon's Lounge, Petaluma, CA  
Moody's Bistro & Lounge, Truckee, CA  
KFJC, Los Altos Hills, CA  
21 Grand, Oakland, CA  
The Empty Space, Bakersfield, CA  
The Temple Bar, Los Angeles, CA  
Blue Dragon Coffeehouse, Albuquerque, NM  
Western Sky Café, Taos, NM  
High Mayhem, Santa Fe, NM  
Dazzle Restaurant & Lounge, Denver, CO  
Other Ideas at Voz Alta, San Diego, CA  
KFJC, Los Altos Hills, CA  
The Luggage Store Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
Café Metropol, Los Angeles, CA  
The Empty Space, Bakersfield, CA

## 2006

Academy of Creative Education, Los Angeles, CA  
Café Metropol, Los Angeles, CA

## 2007

Academy of Creative Education, Los Angeles, CA  
SIMM Series, San Francisco, CA  
KFJC, Los Altos Hills, CA  
1510 8th Street Performance Space, Oakland, CA  
Nile Theater, Bakersfield, CA  
CRCA at UC San Diego, La Jolla, CA  
Portfolio, Long Beach, CA  
Café Metropol, Los Angeles, CA  
Heaven Gallery, Chicago, IL  
Int'l Society for Improvised Music (ISIM)  
2nd Annual Conference, Evanston, IL

## 2008

Apollo Jazz Café, Montpellier, France  
Baloard, Montpellier, France  
Le Mandala, Toulouse, France  
castillo/corrales, Paris, France  
Bennington College, Bennington, VT  
Sanctuary for Independent Media, Troy, NY  
Clean Feed Festival III in conjunction with the  
Festival of New Trumpet Music (FONT),  
Living Theatre, New York City

## 2009

Oakwood School, Los Angeles, CA  
Metro Galleries, Bakersfield, CA  
The Pharaoh's Den, Riverside, CA  
The Jazz Bakery, Los Angeles, CA

## 2010

The Stone, New York, NY  
Montalvo Arts Center, Saratoga, CA  
CSU Bakersfield, Bakersfield, CA  
Royal T, Los Angeles, CA

## 2011

Is That Jazz? Festival, Seattle, WA  
JazzPop at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA  
Berkeley Arts Festival, Berkeley, CA  
Oakwood School, Los Angeles, CA  
Blue Whale, Los Angeles, CA

## SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDING SOURCES

2010-11 - LUCAS ARTIST RESIDENCY PROGRAM, MONTALVO ARTS CENTER  
2010 - PELLETIER FOUNDATION FINE ARTS GRANT  
2008 - CHAMBER MUSIC AMERICA FRENCH-AMERICAN JAZZ EXCHANGE  
2007 - AMERICAN COMPOSERS FORUM *SUBITO* GRANT PROGRAM  
2007 - INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR IMPROVISED MUSIC (ISIM)

# SELECTED PRESS

“One of the best things in jazz to emerge in the new millennium.”

–*The Wire*

“The MTKJ Quartet's music is the shit...”

–*Tucson Weekly*

“This music is a sinuous dance, but one where every move, every exit and entry, every bob and weave, is made with razor-sharp precision... the Empty Cage Quartet finds a new way forward for the modern-day free jazz quartet.”

–*Signal to Noise Magazine*

“Like urban folk music of the future...”

–*Amazing Sounds (Barcelona, Spain)*

“Excellent performances that take a listener far beyond clichés of noisy, atonal, free jazz, and into an atmosphere where propulsive, exciting grooves can sit alongside floating, lounge-like passages and carnival excitement.”

–*Stride Magazine (UK)*

“In your face, angular, fresh, and assertively spontaneous.”

–*LAist*

“Eye-opening... there is plenty of substance behind the appealing façade, and the group deserves wider exposure.”

–*Paris Transatlantic Magazine*

“A taste of the future of west coast jazz.”

–*JunkMedia Magazine*

“The Empty Cage Quartet embodies some of the West Coast's finest acoustic improvisation. Transcending their influences, these four rise to the challenge of carving out their own space and sound.”

–*Cadence Magazine*

“Wildly eclectic...”

–*The Santa Fe Reporter*

“Smart, kicking and as natural as a heartbeat... an unaffected, personalized amalgam of the most significant creative (as opposed to political) developments in jazz from the past several years.”

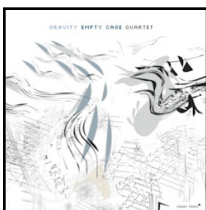
–*JazzTimes*

“...In other words, they're planning to blow the doors off the joint!”

–*The Stranger (Seattle)*

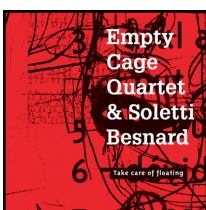
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# DISCOGRAPHY



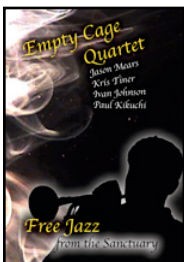
## Gravity

(Clean Feed CF161CD) 2009  
Recorded in Brooklyn, NY, September 22-23, 2008



## Take Care of Floating

(Rude Awakening Présente) 2009  
Empty Cage Quartet & Soletti/Besnard  
Recorded in Montpellier, France, June 2008



## Free Jazz from the Sanctuary

(DVD/NTSC/Color/Stereo/58min) 2009  
Recorded live at the Sanctuary for Independent Media in Troy, NY, September 20, 2008



## Stratostrophic

(Clean Feed CF103CD) 2008  
Recorded in Los Angeles, August 13-14, 2006



## Hello the Damage!

(pfMENTUM CD040-2CD) 2006  
Recorded Live in Los Angeles, December 30, 2005



## Day of the Race

(Nine Winds CD0258) 2005  
Recorded in Los Angeles, July 13-14, 2004



## Making Room For Spaces

(Nine Winds CD0245) 2004  
Recorded in Seattle, March 28, 2003