

Brian Woodruff

Drummer, Composer, Educator

22-59 41st Street, #1R, Astoria, NY 11105 (917)509-8135

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Bio

Drummer **Brian Woodruff** has toured the United States, Asia, and Europe and has performed with Bobby Watson, Marian MacPartland, Ingrid Jensen, Gary Versace, Jon Irabagon, David Lahm, Harvie S, Jiggs Whigham, Jerry Hahn, Adam Niewood, Toru Dodo, Stacy Dillard, and on the Today Show.

Recently, Woodruff has been busy performing with his own group, The Brian Woodruff Sextet, as well as with The Genes and Jazz Project, The New-Trad Octet, Akemi, Marieann Meringolo, and Chuck Cooper. Recent recordings include [In the Spirit](#) with Marieann Meringolo and an as yet unreleased date with The New-Trad Octet. For the past year, he has been running the Blackbird's Session, one of NYC's premier jam sessions, every Sunday night near his home in Astoria, Queens. Brian regularly brings in a revolving cast of New York's finest musicians to perform with him in the house band at Blackbird's. Woodruff's CD [The Tarrier](#), his first as a leader, features an all-original set of compositions arranged for his sextet. The CD has continued to garner rave reviews and critical acclaim since its release.

Mr. Woodruff received a Bachelor of Music in Applied Percussion from the University of Connecticut and a Master's Degree in Jazz and Commercial Music from the Manhattan School of Music. His former teachers include Bill Stewart, John Riley, Carl Allen, and Justin DiCioccio. He is currently on the faculty of Brooklyn Music School and Long Island Conservatory.

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EDUCATION

Manhattan School of Music, Master of Music, 1995

University of Connecticut, Bachelor of Music, 1990

TEACHERS

Drums: Bill Stewart, John Riley, Justin DiCioccio, Dave Rataczjack, Carl Allen

PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

Brian Woodruff Quartet/Sextet

Jacob Varmus Quartet

New-Trad Octet

Bobby Watson

Chris Botti

Eric Lewis

Marian McPartland

Harvie S

Jiggs Whigham

Byron Stripling

Today Show, with the Jeff Newell Quartet

Gary Versace Trio

Jerry Hahn

Toru Dodo

David Lahm Sextet

Unity Church

Marieann Meringolo

New Music Consort/PULSE Percussion Ensemble

Astoria Symphony

Nick Russo Trio

Workshop 39, house drummer, Astoria, NY

NYU Silent Film Festival at Lincoln Center

Musical Theater Orchestras:

A Chorus Line (1997-98 U.S. tour, 1999 Asia Tour), I Know What You're Thinking, The Entertainer, Three Penny Opera, Tintypes, 1940's Radio Hour, Chicago,

Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, MI

Homowack Resort-House Drummer (Catskills)

Hartt All-Star Jazz Ensemble

RECORDINGS

Brian Woodruff Sextet, "The Tarrier" (2009, Crow's Kin)

Marieann Meringolo, "In the Spirit" (2008), Golden Chords Records)

Jeff Newell's New-Trad Octet, "Brownstone" (2007 Blujazz)

Marieann Meringolo, "Here's to the Ladies" (2007 Golden Chords Records)

Aimee Allen, "Dream" (2006)

Jacob Varmus, "All the Things We Still Can Be" (2005 Crow's Kin)

Michael Patterson Trio, "Countenance" (1999)

Jean-Jerome Sache Trio, "Moods of Manhattan" (1998 Chase)

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Press

“...one of the most up-and-coming drummer/composers on the scene today....a first-rate composer. His ability to blend the voices in the front-line and create intriguing harmonies put him in a class by himself.”

-Dan Bilawsky, Jazz Inside magazine (formerly Jazz Improv magazine)

...this up and coming jazz drummer does much more than just keep time. A smart leader that knows how to pick the right sidekicks, Woodruff has a great musical vocabulary that he let's speak eloquently on his behalf. Here's a young lion to watch.

-Chris Spector, Midwest Record

Woodruff shows many sides to his craftsmanship but whether his compositions are prancing jubilantly or mourning inwardly, the harmonies are spot on and flawless.

-Susan Frances, Jazz Times Online

Although Woodruff gives his associates ample space, his drums center everything and his playing is steady and playful in nature.

-Brad Walseth, chicagojazz.net

Imaginative, expressive compositions.

-Drumhead magazine

The drumming is punctual, impeccable, crisp...While it is well written, wonderfully performed, it's all very human, too. That sets his music apart.

-Gray Hunter, A Hand in the Act of Writing blog

...as a composer and drummer, Woodruff is right on time with his delivery in this excellent, jazzy album.

-Dean Poling, Valdosta Daily Times

Brian Woodruff's engaging new release "The Tarrier" is a refreshing new sound that will definitely grab your attention from the opening track. Containing excellent charts performed by a solid cadre of players, "The Tarrier" will have the ear of the critics and the approval of jazz audiences once they sample this very fine dish.

-Edward Blanco, eJazzNews.com

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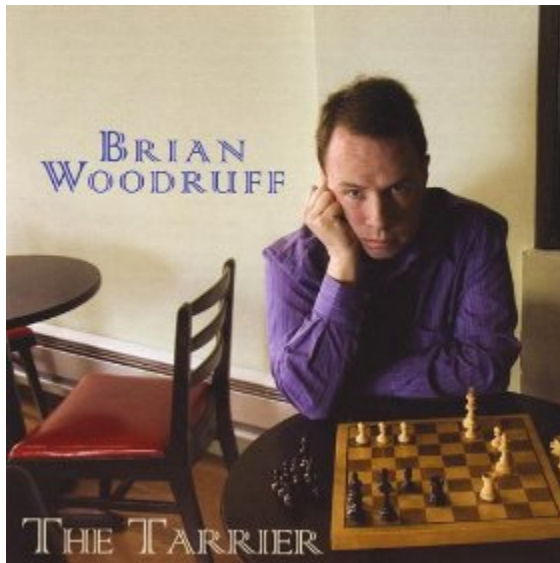
Brian Woodruff: Chorale

Track: Chorale, CD: *The Tarrier* (Crows' Kin Records)

Musicians: [Brian Woodruff](#) (drums), [Lisa Parrott](#) (alto sax), [Jacob Varmus](#) (cornet), [Alan Ferber](#) (trombone), [Nate Radley](#) (guitar), [Matt Clohesy](#) (bass).

Composed by Brian Woodruff

Recorded: Park West Studios, Brooklyn, New York, February 8 and 9, 2007



Rating: 96/100 ([learn more](#))

Drummer/composer Brian Woodruff has written a beautiful piece here that seems like it could have been written in an earlier lifetime. The main theme has a striking & spare introduction via the Jacob Varmus' cornet and the simple bass lines of Matt Clohesy. Woodruff adds another layer by then bringing in trombone. This duet lineup absolutely shines. Ah, but then we take a slight detour into jazzland as Woodruff begins to paint out the rhythm on his kit as guitarist Nate Radley takes an expansive solo. The horns, now aided by Lisa Parrott's alto, come in on the next chorus. It's an emotional moment, one that's repeated with even more intensity at the end when it's the horns that are left alone to make the final statement. Somehow, 'beautiful' doesn't quite describe it.

Reviewer: [Mark Saleski](#), Tags: [2000s jazz](#)

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Drum Hit

After years on the skins, Astoria's Brian Woodruff takes first crack at leading a jazz band

By Morgan Rousseau

Thursday, June 11, 2009 11:43 AM EDT



“The Tarrier” is the new release from composer, drummer and Astoria resident Brian Woodruff, a longtime New York jazz musician hoping to hit a broad musical audience with his first album. The CD is set to release June 15 and will be followed by an album release party featuring the entire ensemble of “The Tarrier” on June 28 at the Blue Owl in Manhattan.

“Tarrier” is a collection of songs composed by Woodruff over a long period of time. Many of the songs were ones Woodruff had previously begun composing and revived for the album. The eight songs each have a story behind them.

The album’s title track was inspired by a game of chess a few years back. On that particular occasion Woodruff was winning most of the games — until the endgame.

“Turn after turn, my friend watched as I missed opportunities for checkmate as I tried to bring in more pieces and even get an extra queen. I lost a few of those games and the most embarrassing of them ended in a stalemate,” he said. “He loves to bring that one up in conversation. ‘You did everything you needed to do, and then you tarried.’”

In future games, whenever Woodruff and his friends found anyone guilty of bragging and taunting they labeled him The Tarrier and joked that it sounded like a Blue Note title, like The Sidewinder or The Preacher.

Woodruff said he put a special effort into composing “A Wreath of Cloud.”

Cont.

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“I manufactured the middle section by working on it for two hours a day and throwing half of it out. It took me two weeks to finish it,” he said. In the end, he feels like he came up with a good product, though the process was not how he usually works.

All of the songs are performed by Woodruff on the drums along with the rest of his sextet — Lisa Parrott on alto and soprano saxophones, Jacob Varmus on trumpet and cornet, Alan Ferber on trombone, Nate Radley on guitar and Matt Clohesy on bass.

Woodruff is quick to credit these musicians, citing them as components of the album’s charm. He names Parrott as a fabulous musician who makes the sax sound the way he wants it to sound. “She has a soul way of interpreting and suggesting time. She’s subtle and really exact at same time,” Woodruff said.

A fellow Astoria resident, Clohesy has played with Woodruff for about 10 years. “He’s one of the best bass players I’ve ever had a chance to play with. I’m always worried about him being bored because he interprets so fast,” Woodruff said.

Woodruff had previously collaborated with Radley and Varmus. Since 2002 Varmus and Woodruff have worked together, putting out two recordings under Varmus’ Crow’s King label. “Terminal Stillness” has yet to be released, and “All The Things We Still Can Be” was already released.

Woodruff said he wanted to include Radley because he “felt where he is going as a soloist is really powerful and dramatic all the time.”

But “Tarrier” is a first time collaboration between Woodruff and trombonist Alan Ferber. “When I went to see his nonet, I was so inspired by it. Some of the CD was old, and it was renewed for the sextet because of Alan,” Woodruff said.

Woodruff lived in Newburgh, N.Y., until the age of 15 before moving to Connecticut. He received a bachelor of music degree in applied percussion from the University of Connecticut in 1990 and a master’s degree in jazz and commercial music from the Manhattan School of Music in 1995. Since then, Woodruff has had a vibrant career in music, extending his talent throughout the United States, Asia and Europe. Woodruff is currently on the faculty of the Brooklyn Music School and Long Island Conservatory.

Woodruff has also performed with Bobby Watson, David Lahm, Harvie S, Jiggs Whigham, Jerry Hahn, Gary Versace and Adam Niewood, to name a few. Most recently Woodruff has been performing alongside The Jacob Varmus Quintet, The New-Trad Octet, The Komeda Project, Todd Schneider and Carol Sudhalter and the Astoria Big Band, among others.