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## Tia Fuller Biography

Jazz musicians are blessed with the desire and ability to play a genre that has a history as rich as its sound. All the greats, past and present know that it's not enough to simply play the notes, one has to live the music and feel it with every breath. When Mack Avenue recording artist, Tia Fuller picks up her sax to play, the two become one and something amazing happens as the notes and reverberations of her musical elixir fill the room. Suddenly, everything in the universe feels right and it's easy to see and hear why this artist and teacher, who has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music from Spelman College in Atlanta, GA, (*Magna Cum Laude*) and Master's degree in Jazz Pedagogy and Performance from the University of Colorado at Boulder (*Summa Cum Laude*), was selected to be a member of the all-female band touring with R&B star, **Beyoncé**. As part of the *I AM..Sasha Fierce* and *Beyoncé Experience World Tour* promoting the superstar's CD's, Tia has played in various venues throughout the US, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. She is a featured soloist on the *Beyoncé Experience DVD (Me, Myself and I)*, *I AM Yours / DVD (Wynn Theatre)* and also appeared on number of major television shows, such as *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, *BET Awards*, *American Music Awards* and *Total Request Live*, and the *2010 Grammy Awards*. Most recently, she also has performed as the featured soloist with Beyoncé for President Obama at the White House.

An accomplished performer in her own right, Tia has recorded three CDs with her quartet. The first, *Pillar of Strength* (2005/Wambui), received praise as being "*an exhilarating work that introduced her as a leader who strives for perfection*" (Terrell Holmes, *All About Jazz Magazine*). Her sophomore release, *Healing Space* (2007/Mack Avenue), is an offering of "melodic medicine" that the wide-eyed optimist sincerely hopes will serve as a healing agent for those who indulge in it. Tia has released her third CD "Decisive Steps", March, 16 2010, 2<sup>nd</sup> under the Mack Avenue label, which has received: **the #1 JazzWeek rating for two weeks straight**, ranked #3 in JET magazines top jazz cd's, and nominated for Best Jazz album for JazzWeek. Tia's quartet was featured at Oris Watches/ Time Tourneau building for WBGO and the American Jazz Museum's "Blue Room," and Lincoln Center's *Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola*. Tia can also be seen performing regularly with a number of bands, including the **Ralph Peterson** Septet, the **T.S. Monk** Septet, the **Jon Faddis** Jazz Orchestra, the **Rufus Reid** Septet, the **Sean Jones** Quintet, the **Nancy Wilson** Jazz Orchestra, and **Wycliffe Gordon** Septet.

The dynamic saxophonist has been featured on the cover of *JazzTimes Magazine* (June 2010), as well featured in *Jazz Improv Magazine*, *Rocky Mountain News*, *The Philadelphia Tribune*, *The Star Ledger*, *Downbeat Magazine*, *New York Time* and *New York Beacon* and many other print and online publications. In addition to receiving numerous awards and marks of distinction, Tia was honored to be the keynote speaker at the Jazz Institute of New Jersey's 2003 graduation ceremony, where she presented her "Journey to Success" speech. She also be featured soloist playing "The National Anthem" for Detroit Tiger Stadium in Sept. 2009, and featured on Fox 5 News in Detroit and Washington D.C. Also, in January 2008, she had the privilege of participating in a press conference with pianist and composer, **Danilo Perez** and the Governor of the Republic of Panama, Carlos A. Villarino.

Tia believes her passion for teaching and inspiring students is in her genes because her parents were educators/administrators in the Denver Public School District. As a devoted educator, she presents lectures and teaches ensembles and masterclasses at some of the most respected institutions in the country, including Stanford University's "Jazz Workshop," the University of Idaho's Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival, New Mexico State University, the IAJE Jazz Convention, Purchase College, WBGO's "Children in Jazz" Series, Duquesne University and Panama Jazz Festival.

Tia moved to Jersey City, NJ two days before the events of September 11, 2001. Despite the fact that the jazz community believed there was not much work in the area during that period, she wasn't discouraged and used the tragic event as a reason to succeed. She got her first gig playing in a big band at a fish fry in South Jersey. **Brad Leali**, who was playing in the Count Basie Orchestra at the time, spread the word that Tia was a skillful saxophonist who also played the flute. This brought her to the attention of others in the jazz community, including **Gerald Wilson**, **Jimmy Heath**, **Don Braden** and **Don Byron**, which led to her performing with a number of luminaries in the world of jazz.

With music in her blood and a song in her heart, Tia was born in Aurora, Colorado to jazz musicians, Fred and Elthopia Fuller. Her father, Fred plays bass and her mother, Elthopia sings. She grew up listening to her parents rehearse in the basement of their home, as well as the music of jazz greats, such as John Coltrane, Sarah Vaughn and Charlie Parker.

Inspired by her older sister, Shamie, Tia began playing classical piano when she was just three years old and continued until she was thirteen. She also began studying the flute when she was nine. Her interest in jazz came into fruition in high school. It was during this time that she began playing the saxophone.

The Colorado native, who now resides in Essex County, New Jersey, says playing music makes her feel as if she is a vessel for the Spirit to flow through. While listening to her songs, she wants people to be uplifted and experience a sense of restoration, compelling them to move forward not in fear, but in love and faith.