

THE KEN MCDONALD QUARTET



Ken McDonald – Bass and Compositions
Paul Metcalfe – Saxophones
Demetri Petsalakis – Guitar and Oud
Lowell Whitty - Drums

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BAND BIOGRAPHY



The Ken McDonald Quartet is an exuberant and dynamically diverse jazz ensemble hailing from Toronto, Ontario. Bassist/leader Ken McDonald formed the group in 2008 in order to create music that takes inspiration from a colorful array of influences. With Paul Metcalfe (saxophones), Demetri Petsalakis (guitar/oud) and Lowell Whitty (drums) rounding out the ensemble, the Ken McDonald Quartet fuses modern and traditional jazz disciplines while stealing world music influences ranging from Brazil, the Middle East and New Orleans. The melody has always been in the main focus in Ken's music and this band brings these tuneful compositions to life with an unbridled rhythmic drive and an exciting spark of spontaneity.

The Ken McDonald Quartet has released two records to critical acclaim: *Pay What You Can* (2010) and *Sitting, Waiting, Wasting Time* (2015), the latter being engineered by Gemini Award winning musician/producer Dave Clark (The Woodshed Orchestra/The Rheostatics). This ensemble has toured central Canada several times and has performed in notable venues such as The Rex, The Emmet Ray,

Options Jazz Lounge and Manhattan's Music Club. The Ken McDonald Quartet was also a featured act at St. Catherine's budding In The Soil Festival in 2015

“Bassist and composer Ken McDonald’s latest outing, *Sitting, Waiting, Wasting Time*, exemplifies the highly informed yet searching nature of much of the music being heard from a new generation of jazz musicians. Schooled in the tradition, they bring a host of their own influences to this ever-evolving music. McDonald’s quartet is a lean affair that takes full advantage of its pared-down instrumentation to create a group sound that is instantly relatable and identifiable.”

- Ted Quinlan, from *The WholeNote* (November 24, 2015)

“The new Ken McDonald Quartet recording ‘Pay What You Can’ is a soul filled and joyous ride that swings all the way through from the deep funk sounds of New Orleans, into the intense modern jazz territory of New York City and all the way over to the meditative Arabic sounds of North Africa. ‘Pay What You Can’ is worth every moment that you spend listening to it. Check it out.”

- Dave Clark – Gemini award winning composer and leader of *The WoodChopper’s Association*.

MEMBERS BIOGRAPHIES

Ken McDonald

Ken is a hard hitting upright and electric bassist, expressive guitarist and an evocative composer. Born and raised in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Ken's musical career came to life when he moved to Toronto and started studying music at York University. Ken has three jazz records to his name, *The Master Plan* (2008), *Pay What You Can* (2011) and *Sitting, Waiting Wasting Time* (2015). Outside of jazz realm, Ken leads a traditional celtic band entitled *O'Scotty* and funk trio *Swamp Groove*, both of which he plays guitar and sings in. Ken also is a busy sideman, playing frequently with Dave Clark's *Woodshed Orchestra*, *Andy De Campos*, *Roger Chong*, *Karl Silveira's Rickshaw*, *Lilly Mason*, *Nick Teehan* and *Ryan Carr*.

Paul Metcalfe

With an extensive background in jazz and funk, Paul is one of the grittiest sax players around. His playing has taken him across Canada touring venues such as the *Montreal Jazz Festival* and opening for *Herbie Hancock* and *Kool and the Gang*. He has recorded a number of albums including *Second Ring*, with funk/dance group *Moses Mayes*, which received the *Western Canadian Music Award for Best Instrumental Album*. Along with the *Heavyweights*, Paul's funky sound can be heard around Toronto with the likes of the *Toronto Jazz Orchestra*, *Drumhand*, *Big Rude Jake*, *The Carissa Neufeld Quartet*, and *The Mike Field Quintet*, among others.

Demetri Petsalakis

Originally from Athens Greece, Demetri Petsalakis is a Toronto based musician performing in a variety of styles with a focus on Greek and Middle Eastern lutes. He is involved with bands such as *Ventanas*, *Nomadica*, *Near East*, *Zephyr*, *The Maryem Tollar Ensemble*, *Samba Squad*, *Lenka Lichtenberg* and the *Heavyset Quartet*, where he is featured playing a variety of stringed instruments including guitar, outi(oud), lyra and baglama. Demetri has a *Master of Music degree in jazz guitar performance* from the *University of Toronto*, and a *Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in music* from *York University*.

Lowell Whitty

Lowell grew up in *The Beaches of Toronto* in a rowdy musical household that heavily embraced *New Orleans Jazz*, *Funk* and *R&B*. He has been drumming for as long as he can remember and has performed around the world in jazz festivals including *Quarter Fest '09* in *New Orleans*, *JazzAscona* and *Rapperswil Blues & Jazz* in *Switzerland* and *Swing in Pic in Mortegliano*, *Italy*. His infectious energetic approach to the drums has kept him in demand in the *Toronto scene*. When Lowell isn't bringing swampy grooves to the *Heavyweights*, he can be heard performing around town in many other projects such as *Notes and Noodles*, *Park Eddy*, *New Orleans Connection*, *Jake Pollock* and the *Soul Pepper Theatre*.