



Eli Bennett

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Photos by Dave Milbourne

Not yet twenty, and this talented young saxophonist has already got a list of achievements to his name. I first caught Eli playing with the Humber Studio Jazz Ensemble directed by acclaimed leader, trumpeter, composer, and arranger, **Denny Christianson**. To say the least I was very impressed with his outstanding solo work, he was playing like a man who had been around twice his age.

Looking back, Eli first started playing sax at age 12, and began playing professionally at 14. At age 15 in 2005 he won the Rico Reed Award at Musicfest Canada for best high school saxophonist in Canada. From there the list of awards kept on coming in; one very notable was in 2007 when the Grammy Foundation selected Eli as the first horn player in the history of their 15 year long programme to perform with the Gibson/Baldwin Grammy Jazz Combo.

Another feather in Eli's hat came when his composition *MISTAKEN PERCEPTION*, was awarded a 2007 Down Beat Magazine Student Award for best high school composition. He has also performed with renowned jazz artists such as, **Oscar Peterson, Hank Jones, Barry Harris, James Moody, Dave Douglas, Mike**

Stern, Chris Potter, Pat LaBarbera, Joe LaBarbera, John LaBarbera and in major jazz festivals across Canada. I could go on about the numerous awards that Eli continues to garnish, and there have been many. However at the end of the day, and from hearing him play, everything that he has received has been well deserved. It is young musicians like, **Eli Bennett** that will keep the jazz scene alive, plus another notch on Canada's long list of superb players.



Eli Bennett
with jazz legend,
Pat LaBarbera