

He "has a fluency and range on the instrument that would have seemed impossible a few years ago...like a trombone version of John Coltrane's tenor saxophone sound." *Robert Palmer, NY Times*

"The most prominent trombonist of his generation." *Gene Seymour, NY Newsday*

Named for five straight years as best trombonist in the Down Beat Critics Poll and declared "the most exciting slide brass player of his generation" by the Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD, Ray Anderson has shown remarkable range. He has led or co-led a daunting assortment of tradition-minded and experimental groups, big bands, blues and funk projects and even a trombone quartet. He is recognized as an original and compelling composer and has recorded more than 70 of his own compositions with these groups. In the tradition of Louis Armstrong, he is a colorful and exuberant performer and a spirited vocalist who induces smiles with his unusual split tones and screech effects.

Anderson attended the University of Chicago Lab School, where his teachers included Frank Tirro, who went on to become dean of Yale's music school, and Dean Hey, who introduced young Ray to musicians as diverse as John Cage and Archie Shepp. He played in R&B bands while attending college in Minnesota and Los Angeles, and funk and Latin bands while living in San Francisco. On the West Coast, he also hooked up with three standout members of its progressive jazz community, tenor saxophonist David Murray and drummers Charles Moffett and Stanley Crouch (now a leading critic, newspaper columnist and author).

In 1973, Anderson moved to New York. He studied and played with the eminent reed player, composer and music theorist Jimmy Giuffre, joined drummer Barry Altschul's trio and played for three years with the quartet of AACM saxophone hero Anthony Braxton. In the '80s, he garnered attention with collective bands including the funk-oriented Slickaphonics and the trio BassDrumBone, featuring bassist Mark Helias and drummer Gerry Hemingway. On a series of acclaimed recordings, he has ranged from Ellingtonia and jazz classics (Old Bottles, New Wine, with Kenny Baron, Cecil McBee and Dannie Richmond, is an album's worth of them) to striking originals including Muddy & Willie (as in Chicago blues immortals Waters and Dixon) and Raven-a-Ning (a play on Thelonious Monk's Rhythm-a-Ning) named after his son Raven).

The prolific Anderson also has demonstrated his special supportive skills on a remarkably wide assortment of albums by Braxton, Murray, Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra, Dr. John, the George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band, Luther Allison, Bennie Wallace, Henry Threadgill, Barbara Dennerlein, John Scofield, Roscoe Mitchell, the New York Composers Orchestra, Sam Rivers' Rivbea Orchestra and others.

While pushing his sound into the future, Anderson has frequently returned to his early love of New Orleans music for inspiration. Both his party going Alligatory Band and second-line-to-the-max Pocket Brass Band, featuring tuba great Bob Stewart, are rooted in the Crescent City.

Anderson also heads up the blues-dipped Lapis Lazuli Band, featuring singer/organist (and old Chicago friend) Amina Claudine Myers, and periodically reunites with Lewis, Gary Valente and Craig Harris in the all-star trombone quartet, Slideride.

As revealed by composition titles *Disguise the Limit*, *The Alligatory Abagua*, *The Gahtooze* and *Snoo Tune* (for his daughter Anabel), the trombonist is unabashedly a good-time player. But as frolicsome as his act can get, he says, “I most certainly don't play joke music. I'm much too aware of the giant shoulders I'm standing on, all the great players who have given so much to music, and the spiritual responsibility of the musician.”

Anderson is a gifted teacher and has long been in demand for workshops and master classes around the world. In 2001, he was a Guest Faculty member of the Music Department at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He was hired as the Director of Jazz Studies there in 2003. “I really enjoy teaching,” he says. “As I get older I seek to serve music not only by performing but by helping to inspire the next generation. Another aspect of this aspiration is my increasing interest in composition.” In response to this interest he has been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Fund for U.S. Artists at International Festivals, the Oberon Foundation and Chamber Music America. In 2001 he became a John S. Guggenheim Fellow.