

## Dave Flippo – BIO

Dr. Dave Flippo is a native of Pittsburgh, PA where he began piano studies at the age of four with Paul Lock, a bell telephone repairman who worked with Dave's dad, Allen. Dave learned to read music before words and continued with music studies for the next 23 years, playing trumpet and piano throughout grade school, and eventually receiving degrees in Music Theory and Composition from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (B.A. 1980), The Eastman School of Music (M.M. 1982), and finally the University of Michigan (D.M.A. 1987). Dave's interest during college was focused more on contemporary concert music and world music, but he continued playing jazz piano without really understanding the more advanced theory behind it.

During his last years at Michigan, Dave met Alan Swain, a jazz theory/piano teacher in Evanston, IL, just north of Chicago, and began "commuting" the 5-hour train ride every other Saturday from Ann Arbor, MI to take concentrated lessons. When he finally graduated from the University of Michigan, he decided to pursue jazz composition and performance and moved to Chicago where he immediately got a job stocking shelves in a liquor store. Gradually he developed a full-time career in music by combining his teaching at Swain's Music Studios, area colleges and jobbing work.

At first Flippo experimented with "third-stream" music, which mixed concert music with jazz sounds and improvisation. He pursued this for a few years with performances and commissions from the Ethos Chamber Orchestra but decided to write small jazz-ensemble pieces he called "global-jazz" - music that blended jazz with different world music styles. In 1992 Dave formed "Flippomusic Globaljazz" to perform his original compositions and arrangements.

The quintet included keyboards, drums, bass, saxophone/flute and guitar (which was eventually changed to percussion.). Flippomusic Globaljazz performed at numerous Chicago events including the Taste of Chicago, The Chicago Symphony East Meets West Festival and the Southshore Jazz Festival as well as area clubs, colleges, libraries and street festivals. The band released two CDs in this global-

jazz style on the city's Southport Records label: **"Tendrils of Light" (Southport Records 1995)** and **"Ganesh" (Southport Records 2001)**. In his personal life, Flippo married Melissa Leeb in 1992 and had two children – Gabriel and Gillian. In fact, young Gabriel's artwork is used on the cover of "Ganesh." Dave and Melissa have lived in Skokie, IL since 1993.

All through this global-jazz period Flippo was writing more mainstream contemporary jazz music – swing tunes, jazz waltzes, funk and Latin pieces and ballads. His music tended to have more "altered" chords and chromatic lines. He also enjoyed arranging jazz and popular covers in unique ways and included a reggae version of a Monk tune on "Tendrils." Dave made his vocal debut on his third CD (now on his own label) – **"When the Heart is Strong, the Voice Rings True," (Oppilf Records-2004)**. This CD features Flippo in duo setting with bassist Donn De Santo. This CD moved away from the global-jazz concept and featured his contemporary jazz compositions as well as cover arrangements of Lennon/McCartney, several jazz standards as well as the *Theme from Spiderman*.

The next period of composition resulted in one of Flippo's most personal and far-reaching projects. He had always loved the ancient Chinese text The Tao Te Ching since his early years in college and decided to set some of the chapters to music. This involved carefully comparing various public domain English translations and shaping them into lyrics he could set to music. The result was 18 pieces covering a wide variety of jazz styles, as well as ambient, Indo-jazz and rock styles. Flippo sings each of these compositions on his fourth CD, **Tao Tunes (Oppilf Records 2012)**. The CD includes guest artists Catherine Hughes on violin, Larry Gray on cello, Neal Alger on guitar, Hamid Drake on percussion and Michael Levin on bass and Bb clarinet.

The next recording project focused on his love of arranging and originated with a jazz gig at an area restaurant. The owner has some very atypical requests for the band to play - like Jimi Hendrix, Cream and Dylan - and Dave jumped into the challenge and made arrangements of *If Six Was Nine*, *Manic Depressions*, and *Little Wing* by Hendrix; *Dance the Night Away* and *Badge* by Cream; and *Tangled Up in Blue* by Bob Dylan. He also mixed in some of his own choices: David Bowie, Lennon/McCartney, Stevie Wonder and Joni Mitchell and soon had enough

arrangements for a CD, which he called “**Life on Mars.**” (Oppilf Records 2016). The CD also included some jazz standards, but no originals.

It was at this point Dave changed the name to “Jazz From Planet Flippo” and began compiling a collection of originals from past and present. The band - now a quartet - includes Dan Hesler on saxophones and flute, Donn De Santo on bass, Heath Chappell on drums with Dave on keys, melodica and vocals.

Many of the tunes on “**Dedications**” (Oppilf Records 2021) were pieces he had written for bandmates and friends, including his former teacher Alan Swain. *Giraffe Trek* and *Syrtoctic* (written in the old global-jazz style) and *Four-Four Waltz* were written over a decade before but never recorded. *Metamorphosis* was also written much earlier but was never fully finished until Flippo reworked it and began rehearsing it for the CD. Since drummer Heath Chappell had requested a piece that would allow him to be in different meters and tempos from the rest of the band, it was a challenging piece to both compose and perform. Flippo added four newer compositions including *Third Eye Open*, in which he strove to create a development section within the piece. *Freewheelin’* is built on a cycle of fourths, rather than fifths, which gave it a “slanted” harmonic sound. *Spring Joy* is a samba and *Finch House* is “in 7.” The album also adds three arrangements of contemporary tunes by Radiohead, Amy Winehouse and Stevie Wonder.

Dr. Dave Flippo continues to teach music, most recently at the College of Lake County and Triton College. He also teaches private lessons both online and in-person. He has created a comprehensive list of his compositions on his website at [www.flippomusic.com/sheetmusic](http://www.flippomusic.com/sheetmusic) which includes links to audio and sheet-music for most of the compositions. The full site, [www.flippomusic.com](http://www.flippomusic.com), acts as a full portfolio for the Jazz From Planet Flippo ensemble.