Daniel Rotem

a listener that plays



Daniel Rotem is a listener that plays. A saxophonist, composer and bandleader based in Los Angeles, he believes that all music begins with listening, a belief that shapes everything from his solo recordings to the bands he leads. His sound is warm and embracing, recognizable from a single note. All About Jazz has praised his “supreme skill, artful phrasing and a personalized subtone sound,” and Jazz Weekly has called him “one of the local giants on the sax scene.”

Growing up by the Mediterranean Sea, Daniel fell in love with the freedom and potential for expression he found in jazz, and started playing the tenor saxophone as a teenager. He studied at the Thelma Yellin High School for the Arts and the Rimon School, earned a full scholarship to Berklee College of Music, and went on to the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance at UCLA (now the Herbie Hancock Institute), where he earned his master’s degree as a fellow from 2014 to 2016.

He has had the privilege to perform or record with Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Billy Childs, Dianne Reeves, Stevie Wonder, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Al Jarreau, Terri Lyne Carrington, Luciana Souza, Vince Mendoza, Larry Goldings, Joe LaBarbera, Jeff Parker, Anthony Wilson, Miguel Atwood-Ferguson, Anat Cohen, Vardan Ovsepian and Josh

Johnson, among many others. He has performed at festivals including the Monterey Jazz Festival, the Playboy Jazz Festival, Jazz nad Odrą in Wrocław, the Red Sea Jazz Festival, the Cape Town International Jazz Festival and the Angel City Jazz Festival, and at venues such as Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, the Hollywood Bowl, the Broad Stage and bluewhale.

Daniel leads two bands: the Daniel Rotem Quartet, with Miro Sprague, Karl McComas-Reichl and Christian Euman, a band with more than a decade of shared history; and Yūgen, a new ensemble inspired by the Japanese idea of a beauty that suggests rather than shows. He has released seven albums as a leader: *Be Nice* (2017), *Serenading the Future* (2018), which DownBeat called "the latest document of a vibrant jazz resurgence in Los Angeles," *Sweet Stuff* with Josh Johnson (Fresh Sound, 2018), *Solo* (2020), *Wise One* with Billy Childs and Darek Oles (2022), *Wave Nature* (Colorfield, 2023) and *Solo II: Under Construction at bluewhale* (2026), which Textura described as "a strikingly intimate communion between performer and place."

A commissioned and award-winning composer, Daniel has had his compositions and arrangements performed by Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Billy Childs, Lalah Hathaway and Dayna Stephens, received a Los Angeles Jazz Society New Note commission, and wrote the original score for the film *Mentally Al.*

Daniel is also a dedicated educator. He has taught at the Stanford Jazz Workshop and Institute, CalArts, Occidental College, USC and LACHSA, and received the Stanford Jazz Workshop's Outstanding Educator Award in 2023. He is a Yamaha Artist and plays Yamaha saxophones exclusively, and is endorsed by Gottsu Mouthpieces and D'Addario Woodwinds.

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