

# *Black Art Jazz Collective*

An all-Star ensemble of African American musicians celebrating Black culture in a positive way through original music.

Jeremy Pelt | Wayne Escoffery | James Burton III  
Victor Gould | Rashaan Carter | Mark Whitfield Jr.



Photo: William Brown

“The Black Art Jazz Collective is a powerhouse of contemporary jazz talent...” *Downbeat Magazine*

“This collective sextet brings together an all-star lineup of rising postbop stars in a group with a political, as well as a musical purpose.”  
*Joel Roberts - The New York City Jazz Record*

“The live audience is appreciative, and the listener will be, too. This is art music that grooves.” *Brian Zimmerman - Downbeat Magazine*

**Black Art Jazz Collective** was founded in 2013 by saxophonist Wayne Escoffery along with trumpeter Jeremy Pelt and drummer Johnathan Blake. All graduating from esteemed music programs in the Northeast and moving to New York City around the same time, the three have been ingrained in the global Jazz scene for over two decades as leaders and invaluable members of ensembles led by Tom Harrell, Bobby Hutcherson, Kenny Barron, Wayne Shorter, Ron Carter and others.

Black Art Jazz Collective came together during an important period of Black identity in American society and in the arts; one of finding new strength and identity within America's true art form, an African American art form, Jazz. BAJC brings together an all-star ensemble of six unapologetically proud Black men of the highest musical integrity who feel it necessary to celebrate Black culture in a positive way. The group's



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commitment, drive, and brotherhood come through in their music reminiscent of groups lead by Jackie McLean, Miles Davis, Woody Shaw, Art Blakey and the like. They consistently receive rave reviews and regularly perform to packed houses of Jazz fans eager to show their appreciation for the

music and the band's message of unity, integrity and pride. The Collective's first two albums *Live at The Side Door* and *Armor of Pride* featured saxophonist Wayne Escoffery, trumpeter Jeremy Pelt, trombonist James Burton III, pianist Xavier Davis, bassist Vicente Archer and drummer Johnathan Blake. With the band's latest album *Ascension*, they bring in an entirely new rhythm section of pianist Victor Gould, bassist Rashaan Carter and drummer Mark Whitfield Jr. Victor Gould and Rashaan Carter were two thirds of master trumpeter Wallace Roney's quintet for many years and have become first calls on their instruments respectively. Mark Whitfield Jr. was introduced to the world of music by his father, guitarist Mark Whitfield. He is a prodigious talent having been performing since he could walk. Now in his 30's he has a long list of accomplishments to his credit having been the drummer in bands led by Wallace Roney, Joe Lovano, Orrin Evans, Sean Jones and his father.

As did Art Blakey and The Jazz Messengers before them, Black Art Jazz Collective has successfully brought in new voices to influence their sound and add to their lineage of accomplished, proud Black artists. The band continues to be dedicated to celebrating cultural and political icons, as well as preserving the historical significance of African Americans in Jazz.