

## Biography: WALTER KEMP, III

*"Musicianship with creativity and joy in each moment; informed by tradition, while exploring his unique modern voice..."*

*-Robert Davis, Writer/Contributor; Down Beat Magazine*

The son of a celebrated classical and gospel composer, Walter's future was shaped by watching his father perform his original compositions at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Needless to say, success runs in Walt's genes, as he has won widespread critical acclaim for his own unique and compelling compositions that cheekily toss about the unexpected, while using the Rhodes and melodica to meld traditional chord progressions.

Winner of Night Life Magazine's 2012, 2013, and 2014 Music Award for "Best Original Keyboard Player," Walter dominates Western New York's jazz circle. In addition to taking home a string of top awards from ArtVoice, the Niagara Region's premiere arts publication, Walter has collaborated with various musical greats, including Hammond B3 ace Bobby Jones, Sabu Adeyola of Ahmad Jamal Trio (and protégé to the late Charles Mingus), Rey Scott of Sun-Ra's Archestra, and Bobby Militello of the Dave Brubeck Quartet.

A highly-sought professional in the region's progressive music scene, Walter is the youngest musician, in more than three decades, to be selected to serve on the Board of Directors for the Historic Colored Musician's Club which is the oldest jazz club in the world. In 2012, the Western New York Minority Media Professionals selected Walter to serve on its Expert Curatorial Panel for the landmark jazz photo "A Great Day in Buffalo." In addition to the panel he was asked to sit in the photo among the region's living jazz legends which included seasoned Grammy-winning artists and rising stars. His stellar writing, production and musical skill earned him a nomination to serve on *New York State Council on the Arts* funding review panel as well as a place in the Historic Colored Musician's Club Museum designed by Hadley Exhibits which opened in 2013.

Walter's jazz ensemble, Gruvology, having just returned from a hugely successful European tour, is already planning the next set of tour dates, both internationally and stateside. Walter's participation in touring groups and orchestras across Africa, Europe and North America has allowed him to push the musical envelope, drawing the area's most creative musical artists together for long-term collaborative work, which includes recording assignments with the members of GRUVOLOGY, of which he is a co-founder. Recognized as one of Western New York's most interesting ensembles of jazz music, GRUVOLOGY has a new recording entitled: "FREEWAY" which was released in 2014 and featured all original work. For the second year in a row GRUVOLOGY was awarded the 2013 "Best Western New York Jazz Group" of the year. In 2014's Reader's Poll, GRUVOLOGY was awarded "Best Jazz/Fusion Group." GRUVOLOGY was also ArtVoice's staff pick for "Best Jazz Group" in the 2012 Western New York Music Awards.