



# SHIRAZETTE TINNIN

## MUSIC, MOVEMENT & WELL-BEING

### BY JOSH GAGNON

In the life of a jazz musician, mentors serve a critical role. Understanding the musical, social and professional realities through those who came before is of invaluable benefit. Drummer and percussionist Shirazette Tinnin understands this dynamic on a deep level. She credits her trombone-playing mother, college professors, peers and others with various aspects of her career success. This realization, combined with the drummer's musical experiences and output to date, has resulted with Tinnin finding herself in a unique, and influential, mentoring position: to lead the next generation of great artists.

In the studio and on the road, the drummer's collaborations span a wide array of cultures, genres and instruments. *Renegades* from flute player Nicole Mitchell's Chicago-based Black Earth Strings is one of Tinnin's earliest credits, weaving in and out of styles between drum set and percussion. Her work with trumpeter Gabriel Alegria's Afro-Peruvian Sextet brought her to NYC after graduate studies at Northern Illinois University (NIU), further cementing a reputation for being a versatile multi-instrumentalist. Tinnin's percussion styles have also been featured on records by saxophonists Tia Fuller and Camille Thurman, as well as bassist and vocalist Mimi Jones. A more recent recording with genre-bending artist and vocalist Queen Esther shows a less common side of Tinnin's playing, steeped in blues, gospel and Western swing. The drummer also credits the authenticity displayed on these recordings to an immersion in various musical styles, particularly the example of her holistic study of Peruvian music, wherein she traveled to Peru, studying with masters in Lima and attending Peñas, Peruvian celebrations of folklore and culture.

This immersive study goes hand-in-hand with a more recent facet of Tinnin's career: teaching. Driven by challenges faced in her own education, she hopes to fill in the gaps for students and audiences alike. Informed by her diverse array of performing experiences, she encourages her students to dive deep into whatever music they study. In concerts, she will take time between pieces to explain certain aspects of the music, such as the cultural roots of a rhythm or the interaction between instruments (she attributes these values to one of her mentors, the late NIU professor Ronald Carter).

As an associate professor at Berklee College of Music, Tinnin not only works with private students, but directs a big band, striving to instill her informed stylistic approach and infectious love for the craft. She has also developed a course at Berklee for drummers that focuses on physical well-being, with the hopes of achieving a "fluidity" in drumming. Her expertise in the field of fitness and health goes well beyond a simple exercise routine. Growing up as an athlete and playing a year of Division 1 basketball at Appalachian State University, has led her to always prioritize fitness. Like many jazz

musicians arriving in NYC, Tinnin confronted the need for a day job and turned to personal training as a practical solution. What started as a financial necessity led her to develop an expert awareness of the human body. Holding certifications from the National Academy of Sports Medicine, the International Sports Sciences Association and the American Fitness Professionals and Associates, she understands not only the conditioning, but recovery requirements of musicians.

In addition to her many collaborations and teaching career, Tinnin has released two albums as a leader. *Humility: Purity of My Soul* is the result of friend and bandmate Mimi Jones' encouragement to put together a project of her own. Bandleading hadn't been a priority for Tinnin, who was born and raised in North Carolina with a life circumstance that didn't encompass the notion of leadership. Because of this ideation, she had some trepidations about her leadership ability, especially as related to her compositional skills. She credits another friend, trumpeter Donald Malloy, with giving her the final push to get her music in front of a band, with *Humility* the result of that effort. The writing for the album was based on experiences she had with collaborators including Fuller, Jones and Thurman, all of whom appear on the album. Her second album, *Sonic Wallpaper Vol. 1: The Cards That Life Can Deal*, is a significant sonic departure from her leader debut, pulling from early influences, such as Weather Report and The Police, to create an album that better represents her complete musical identity. In her words, "*Sonic Wallpaper* was my introduction to my fans, friends and to myself to speak in a way that had more of a backbeat."

As for what's next, fans can look forward to concert dates this month (*Sonic Wallpaper* is at Interchurch Center in Morningside Heights, a concert presented by Jazzmobile) and in April (Tinnin's Moods of Her project appears at St. Paul's Chapel as part of Trinity Church's "Jazz at One" series). She also tours with vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater (including The Jazz Cruise through the first days of this month). Additionally, Tinnin has several new releases in the pipeline the next few years. Pianist Miki Hayama, along with bassists Christian McBride and Nimrod Speaks, all join the drummer on an unnamed project slated for later this year. With DJ SONI withanEYE, Tinnin is preparing a new duo project, blending drums and electronics, with live performances, also slated for late-2026.

A second volume of *Sonic Wallpaper* is in the works for release either next year or the year after, and if her first two albums are any indication, this forthcoming project will be well worth the wait.

For more info visit [shirazettetinnin.com](http://shirazettetinnin.com). Shirazette Tinnin's *Sonic Wallpaper Band* is at Interchurch Center Feb. 17 (presented by Jazzmobile). See Calendar.

#### Recommended Listening:

- Nicole Mitchell's Black Earth Strings — *Renegades* (Delmark, 2008)
- Mimi Jones — *Balance* (Hot Tone Music, 2013)
- Gabriel Alegria Afro-Peruvian Sextet — *Ciudad de los Reyes* (Saponegro, 2013)
- Shirazette Tinnin — *Humility: Purity of My Soul* (Hot Tone Music, 2014)
- Allan Harris — *Nobody's Gonna Love You Better: Black Bar Jukebox Redux* (Love Productions, 2016)
- Shirazette Tinnin and SonicWallPaper Band — *Sonic Wallpaper Vol. 1: The Cards That Life Can Deal* (She Beats Too, 2020)

#### BAR BAYEUX

1066 Nostrand Ave.  
Brooklyn, NY 11225  
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#### FEBRUARY 2026

#### JAZZ CALENDAR

##### TUESDAYS 8-11PM

Weekly Jam Session  
House Band:  
Diego Voglino with guests

##### WEDNESDAYS 8 & 9:30 PM

Greg Tuohey Trio (2/4)  
Gregory Groover Jr. Quartet (2/11)  
George Colligan Quartet (2/18)  
Anna Webber Quartet (2/25)

##### THURSDAYS 8 & 9:30 PM

Adam Kolker + Jeremy Stratton with guests:  
Ben Monder (2/5) TBA (2/19)  
Peter Kronreif (2/12) Fab4 Tribute (2/26)

##### FRIDAYS 8 & 9:30 PM

Sebastian Noelle Quartet (2/6)  
Locomotive with David Leon, Adam O'Farrill (2/13)  
David Berkman (2/20)  
Ricky Rodriguez Quartet (2/27)

##### SATURDAYS 6 - 7:30 PM DUET SET(S), followed by 8 & 9:30 PM sets:

Sean Pentland/Jerry Bergonzi (2/7)  
Carmen Quill Trio with Jacob Sacks, Billy Hart (2/14)  
Yvonne Rogers (2/21) Emi Makabe (2/28)

NO  
COVER  
ONE DRINK  
MINIMUM

## JAZZ GENIUS

151 Essex St, NY, NY 10002

212-875-JAZZ (5299)

<https://buytickets.at/jazzgenius>

email: [theJazzGenius@gmail.com](mailto:theJazzGenius@gmail.com)

Feb. 5-7

\*8, 10 pm sets

Jon Davis Trio (2/5) / Spike Wilner Trio (2/6-7)  
with Marty Kenny, Andrew Kushnir

Feb. 12-14

Jonny King Trio  
with Ugonna Okegwo, Allan Mednard

Feb. 19-21

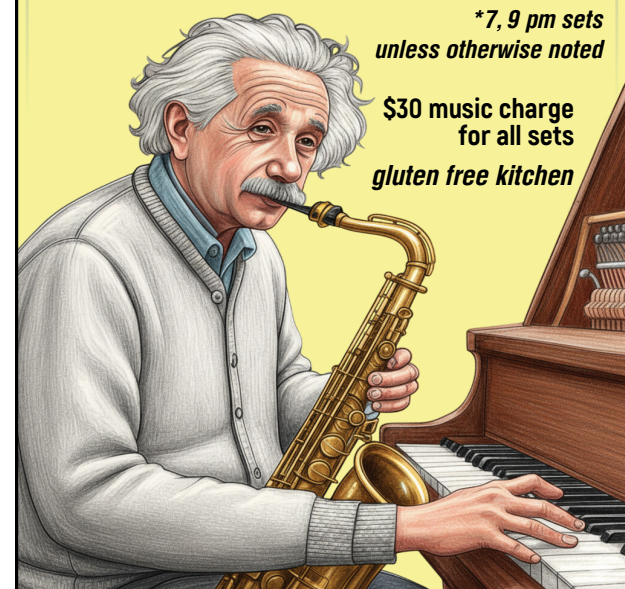
Noriko Ueda Trio  
with Ted Rosenthal, David Alvarez III

Feb. 26-28

David Kikoski Trio  
with Joe Martin, Ari Hoenig

\*7, 9 pm sets  
unless otherwise noted

\$30 music charge  
for all sets  
gluten free kitchen



"Improvisation is Genius"