



joey alexander

Born on June 25, 2003 on the island of Bali, pianist Joey Alexander originally learned about jazz from his dad, who exposed his son to a variety of classic albums from his extensive collection. At the age of six, Joey began teaching himself to play piano using a mini electronic keyboard given to him by his father. He was immediately able to pick out the melody of Monk's "Well, You Needn't," but he didn't stop there. Joey's dad nurtured his gift of swing and improvisation by taking him to jam sessions with veteran musicians in Bali and Jakarta.

Joey's musicianship and grasp of jazz fundamentals developed at a remarkable pace, and at age eight UNESCO invited him to play solo piano for an elated Herbie Hancock during the piano great's visit to Indonesia. Joey later remarked to Hancock, "You told me that you believed in me, and that was the day I decided to dedicate my childhood to jazz."

At nine, Joey won the grand prize at the first Master-Jam Fest, an all-ages competition in Ukraine which included 200 competitors from 17 countries. By 10, he was performing at jazz festivals in both Jakarta and Copenhagen. An invitation from Wynton Marsalis led to his U.S. debut appearance at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Hall in 2014 where he amazed the audience with his musicality, followed by appearances before the Jazz Foundation of America at the Apollo and the Arthur Ashe Learning Center at Gotham Hall. Wishing to encourage the continued development of Joey's prodigious playing, his parents sold the family business in Jakarta and relocated to the United States. Success did not arrive overnight, however. Promoters were skeptical that an 11 year-old could drive substantial ticket sales and captivate discerning jazz audiences, but soon recognized his ability to absolutely delight audiences, despite the challenges associated with learning a new language. Joey experienced a major stroke of luck when he received an invitation from impresario George Wein to perform on two stages at the prestigious Newport Jazz Festival. Joey took full advantage of the opportunity and brought audiences to their feet with his playful musicality and keen sense of swing.

Over the past two years Joey has been paying his dues and honing his craft: learning what it means to be a bandleader, keeping material fresh after repeated performances, and seeking out sidemen who are also collaborators. Along the way, The Joey Alexander Trio has performed at well-known venues and major festivals across the United States and around the globe, including tour dates in Tel Aviv, Marciac, Montréal, Abu Dhabi, Singapore, Bern, Prague, Vienna, Perugia, and his native Indonesia.

Media interest in Joey has resulted in appearances and interviews for *The Today Show*, *60 Minutes*, *CNN*, *The New York Times*, and a host of other television, radio and print media. This has fueled a rare level of public notoriety for Joey as a jazz musician, entirely unheard of for one his age, both within the jazz community and among the public at large.



His 2015 debut album for Motema Music, *My Favorite Things*, garnered two Grammy Award nominations for “Best Jazz Instrumental Album” and “Best Improvised Solo” for his performance of John Coltrane’s “Giant Steps”, making him the youngest jazz artist ever nominated for a Grammy. His performances on the 58th Annual Grammy Awards broadcast – far more magical than what was expected - received standing ovations from the star-studded audience, bringing his talent to the attention of music lovers everywhere, mesmerizing long-time industry professionals, and inspiring other young musicians to pursue their own dreams.

Through all this Joey has remained humble, focused on developing as a player and pursuing his growing interest in composing. His highly-anticipated sophomore album *Countdown* (set for release in September 2016 on Motema Music) showcases Joey’s remarkable development as a contemporary jazz bandleader and promise as a composer. He develops fresh takes on well-known tunes, combining them seamlessly with his own original compositions in a way which invites both new and seasoned listeners in, and reflects the true emotional heart and soul of his musical personality.

Joey says that his growth as a composer is due to the hours he spends practicing piano in between his school, media and touring commitments – and his rare moments of free time in which he enjoys doing “regular kid things” like watching movies, playing games, swimming, and tennis. “Sometimes, when I’m just practicing or playing something, new melodic and rhythmic ideas come to me, and I realize that I’m actually starting to compose a song,” he says. “I think that writing memorable tunes comes from listening to so much music from composers and artists I like. I actually find it harder to interpret other people’s songs than to write my own, because I have to figure out and feel what the song is about and find a way to make it my own.”

Wynton Marsalis says of Joey, “There has never been anyone that you can think of who could play like that at his age. I love everything about his playing – his rhythm, his confidence, his understanding of the music.” Now, as he enters his teen years, Joey takes another step in charting his artistic direction with the release of *Countdown*.

“You know, I love both creating music in the studio and performing for people onstage,” he says, “but I have to admit there’s something special about getting a crowd excited by playing jazz live. In most situations I try to be calm, but I love the intense energy that happens between me and the audience. When they express their appreciation in this way, I am inspired to go deeper as a person and musician, improve my craft and create exciting new sounds.”

Building upon the swing and improvisational style that made his first project a critical and popular success, *Countdown* is a reflection of the growth and maturity of Joey Alexander as an artist, and a confident next step toward a limitless future.

