

About Allison Au

Allison Au (pronounced "ow") is JUNO award winning saxophonist, composer and arranger. Highly regarded for her distinctive and imaginative voice, Allison has been lauded as "a new jazz ambassador" for Canada.

Born to a Chinese father and Jewish mother, and raised in the multicultural metropolis of Toronto, Allison fell in love with music as a young child. Her father's eclectic collection of vinyls and CDs exposed her to a wide array of musical styles. Struggling to find a sense of belonging in her biracial identity, the unhinged freedom of improvisation captivated Allison and quickly became her lab for self-expression and exploration.

Au's passion for composition led to the 2009 formation of the Allison Au Quartet featuring Todd Pentney (piano), Jon Maharaj (bass) and Fabio Ragnelli (drums). The ensemble has received continued critical acclaim. Au earned her first JUNO nomination for her debut album, ***The Sky Was Pale Blue, then Grey*** in 2013, and in 2016 seized the JUNO for "Best Jazz Album of The Year: Group" for ***Forest Grove***. In 2019, she garnered another JUNO nomination for "Best Jazz Album of the Year: Group" for ***Wander Wonder***.

Au was the 2017 winner of TD Grand Prix de Jazz (Festival International de Jazz de Montréal), the 2017 winner of Sting Ray Rising Star Award (Halifax Jazz Festival), and 2017 finalist for Toronto Arts Foundation Emerging Jazz Artist Award. In 2018 she was featured on SFJAZZ's 2018 list of "10 Rising Instrumentalists You Should Know." She has toured Canada and the US extensively.

Based in her hometown of Toronto, Au maintains an active role as a performer. In 2022, she joined the Jazz Studies faculty at the University of Toronto as a private instructor.