

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 has garnered one JUNO award win and four JUNO award nominations for each of her four albums: **“The Sky Was Pale Blue, Then Grey”** (2013), **“Forest Grove”** (2016), **“Wander Wonder”** (2019) and **“Migrations”** (2024).

Winner of the 2017 Montreal Jazz Festival TD Grand Prix de Jazz, the 2017 Halifax Jazz Festival Sting Ray Rising Star Award and a 2017 Finalist for Toronto Arts Foundation Emerging Jazz Artist Award, Allison was also featured in 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.