Stanley Cowell - Profile

**Stanley Cowell,** pianist and composer, was born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1941. He studied piano there with Mary Belle Shealy and Elmer Gertz, and pipe organ with J. Harold Harder. By the age of fifteen, he was a featured soloist with the Toledo Youth Orchestra in Kabelevsky's Piano Concerto No. 3, a church organist/choir director, and a budding jazz pianist.

Cowell’s formal training in music has been quite extensive: a Bachelor of Music degree from Oberlin Conservatory and a Master of Music degree from the University of Michigan. He also has additional undergraduate study at the Mozarteum Akademie, Salzburg, Austria, and graduate study at Wichita State University and the University of Southern California. While at U.S.C., 1963-64, he performed Gershwin’s Concerto in F with the Burbank Symphony Orchestra, and played jazz in the Los Angeles area with Curtis Amy’s and Ray Crawford’s bands.

After completing his Masters at Michigan in 1966, Cowell headed for New York City where he worked for such musical artists as Max Roach, Abbey Lincoln, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Herbie Mann, Miles Davis, Stan Getz and the Bobby Hutcherson-Harold Land groups. For several years he was part of Charles Tolliver’s Music Inc., with whom he formed the innovative musician-owned record company, Strata-East, in 1971.


In 1974, he served as a musical director of George Wein’s New York Jazz Repertory Company at Carnegie Hall, along with Gil Evans, Dr. Billy Taylor and Sy Oliver.

During the Seventies, Cowell established his reputation as a versatile and sensitive pianist/composer, performing and recording with Sonny Rollins, Clifford Jordan, Oliver Nelson, Donald Byrd, Roy Haynes, Richard Davis, Art Pepper, Jimmy Heath and many more great musical artists.

From 1974-1984 he toured, recorded and conducted workshops throughout the Americas, Europe and Japan as the featured pianist with the Heath Brothers (Percy, Jimmy and Albert).

He was a recipient of a Meet The Composer/Rockefeller Foundation/AT&T Jazz Program grant for 1990-1991, for the creation of "Piano Concerto No. 1" (in honor of Art Tatum). It was premiered by the Toledo Symphony Orchestra, January 17, 18, 1992.
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"His total command of jazz piano, especially in solo performances, is impressive."
[BP] © Rough Guides

Cowell served on the board of the Charlin Jazz Society, producer of jazz concerts in Washington, D.C., 1990-1996. He and his wife Sylvia currently produce concerts in Prince George's County, Maryland, under The Piano Choir, Inc., a non-profit music and educational entity.

In July, 1992, he was the featured piano soloist with the Colorado Festival Orchestra in Gershwin’s Rhapsody In Blue, and many other "third stream" works, conducted by Gunther Schuller and Larry Newland. Stanley Cowell is currently a tenured professor at Rutgers University, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Department of Music, New Brunswick, New Jersey. From 1981-1999, he was a professor at Herbert Lehman College, C.U.N.Y., Bronx, New York, teaching music history, jazz history, piano, improvisation, electronic/computer music, arranging, and jazz band. From 1988-1989, he concurrently taught jazz piano at New England Conservatory, Boston.

"Teaching jazz at Rutgers is like preaching to the converted. I try to be a good craftsman and composer. I’m always trying to find new ways to express myself, always studying. That’s why I teach; I’m learning from my students."

Stanley Cowell, the pianist and composer, performs and lectures professionally as a solo pianist, and in ensemble formations from duo to orchestra. He performs in a variety of venues, from jazz club to concert hall, often utilizing electronic sounds and African finger piano.

Audio, Photos and Video Clips from performances at: https://docs.google.com/folder/d/0B2EgAWPq8mJqUHQxWklyR2c1b28/edit

Selected recent recordings:

- **Angel Eyes**, 1994, solo piano. (SteepleChase)
- **Setup**, 1994, sextet. (SteepleChase)
- **Piano Jazz**, 1995, Marian McPartland’s Piano Jazz with Stanley Cowell. (Jazz Alliance)
- **Live at Copenhagen Jazz House**, 1995, trio. (SteepleChase)
- **Mandara Blossoms**, 1996, quintet. (SteepleChase)
- **Hear Me One**, 1997, quartet. (SteepleChase)
- **As We Were Saying**, 1997, with The Heath Brothers. (Concord)
- **Dancers In Love**, 1999, Stanley Cowell Trio. (Venus)
- **Prayer For Peace**, 2010, Stanley Cowell Trio featuring Sunny Cowell on viola & vocals. (SteepleChase)
- **It’s Time**, 2011, Stanley Cowell Trio (SteepleChase)

Recordings by **Stanley Cowell** at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [iTunes.com](https://www.itunes.com)
Selected recent projects:

- Stanley Cowell played a solo concert at Billboard Tokyo, Japan, March 17, 2012.
- Celebrated his 70th birthday and the release of his new CD with his trio and his violist - singer daughter, Sunny, in two shows at An die Musik, Baltimore, MD Sunday May 15, 2011.
- Was the featured piano soloists with the Rutgers Symphony Band in two performances of Gershwin's *Rhapsody In Blue* on February 25 and March 10, 2011.
- Was the featured pianist with his daughter, Sunny, on vocals and viola, at a CD Release Party and Performance of Cowell's new CD *Prayer For Peace* (SteepleChase) at the jazz club, Murphy's, Toledo, OH, on January 8, 2011.
- Was the featured pianist with Nasheet Waits Quartet, *Equality*, at the Jazz Gallery, NYC, during a weekend of performances by top jazz groups celebrating the music of Ornette Coleman, September 26, 2010.
- Was featured pianist soloist at Maryland-National Capital Commission of Parks & Recreation event for retiring Arts CEO Barbara Funk, at Newton White Mansion, Mitchellville, MD, September 15, 2010.
- The Rutgers Symphony Orchestra gave the premiere of Stanley Cowell's *Asian Art Suite for Orchestra and Jazz Septet*, Wednesday, December 2, 2009.
- Performed a 75-minute solo piano concert celebrating 100th birthday of jazz piano great Art Tatum, presented by the African American Legacy Project of Northwest Ohio at Owens Community College, Perrysburg (Toledo), OH, Fine and Performing Arts Center, Oct. 11, 2009; gave a one-hour lecture/workshop at the venue the following morning, Monday, Oct 12, 2009 for students and interested public.
- Performed a 75-minute solo piano concert at the Verona Jazz Festival on the Corte Mercato Vecchio stage, June 28, 2009.
- Was the featured pianist with the Charles Tolliver Orchestra in replicating all the arrangements and performances of the historic 1959 Thelonious Monk Orchestra at Town Hall, NYC, for the 50th anniversary of that concert on the exact date 50 years later, at Town Hall, NYC, February 26, 2009. The concert was broadcast live from WNYC and streamed online for a month. All of Thelonious Monk's piano introductions and his solo on "Friday The 13th" were transcribed by Cowell. The concert was produced by Duke University.
- Was the featured pianist with the Charles Tolliver Big Band on a tour of Japan that included 3 concerts in Tokyo and one each in Osaka, Shizuoka and Nagoya, January 21-30, 2009.
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- was the featured pianist with The Cookers, a jazz septet led by trumpeter David Weiss, co-featuring Eddie Henderson, Billy Harper, Billy Hart, Cecil McBee, and Myron Walden, at Myerhof Hall in the Baltimore Museum of Art, October 4, 2008.
- The Stanley Cowell Trio featuring bassist Tarus Mateen and drummer Nasheet Waits performed a 60-minute concert set for a fund-raiser presented by SoJers4Obama (South Jersey for Barack Obama) at the "Atrium," Mt. Laurel, NJ, September 6, 2008.
- performed a 90-minute solo piano concert at the Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, OH, January 12, 2008, presented by music presenting organization, Cityfolk. Stanley Cowell was the featured pianist with the Charles Tolliver Orchestra in replicating all the arrangements and performances of the historic 1959 Thelonious Monk Orchestra at Town Hall, NYC. All of Monk's piano introductions and his solo on "Friday The 13th" were transcribed by Cowell. This concert was part of six-week, eighteen-event celebration of Monk's music at Duke University, NC, October 13, 2007.
- was the featured pianist with The Cookers, a jazz septet led by trumpeter David Weiss, at the Chicago Jazz Festival, Bryant Park, Chicago, IL, September 1, 2007.
- gave a full two-part solo jazz piano recital, a lecture and a workshop at Milsaps College, Jackson MS, on the Bell Series (mostly classical) piano recital programs, developed by former MGSA DMA graduate, H. Lynn Raley.
- Stanley Cowell Trio with guest violist/vocalist Sunny Cowell performed a concert of "Civil Rights Era Jazz Compositions" for the week-long Black Culture Center Finale event at Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA, February 24, 2007.
- was the featured pianist with “Great Friends” jazz quartet for the month-long series, Sculptured Sounds, at St. Peter’s Church, 54th Street & Lexington Avenue, NYC, February 11, 2007.
- performed solo concert of arrangements of civil rights era songs (50s, 60s) and related original compositions at John Cotton Dana Library, Rutgers-Newark, October 25, 2006.
- was a featured pianist at the Coltrane Jazz Festival, Awbury Arboretum, Germantown (Philadelphia), PA, September 23, 2006
- co-produced, arranged, composed, performed and directed six MGSA jazz students - Christopher W. Brown, Courtney Bryan, Tom DiCarlo, Barry Spatz, Aaron Weiman, Jason Wexler - in a Piano Dedication Concert at Burlington Township Performing Arts Center, Sunday May 14, 2006. The four jazz piano majors - Bryan, Spatz, Weiman and Wexler - performed as part of a multi-keyboard ensemble and as soloists. The concert was reviewed in the Burlington County Times, May 15, 2006.
- performed as featured pianist and presented a pre-concert workshop/demo session for students with saxist Lew Tabackin’s Quartet at Montgomery High School, Skillman, NJ, as part of a four-day jazz festival sponsored by the Jazz Mentors Program, Skillman, NJ, July 11, 2006.
- performed and lectured in concert and workshops at Christian Howes’ Creative Strings Camp, Columbus Music Hall, Columbus, OH. The rehearsals and workshops with thirty violinists, violists and cellists culminated in a concert of seven Cowell...
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string compositions/arrangements.
Columbus Music Hall, Columbus, Ohio, July 8, 2006 Concert.

• was the featured piano soloist with the Philadelphia Sinfonia Orchestra in the Philadelphia premier of his Family Suite for string orchestra and jazz trio at the Perelman Theatre at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. Mason Gross graduate jazz students Tom DiCarlo and Chris Brown were the bassist and drummer, respectively, in his jazz trio, March 29, 2006.
• was the featured pianist with the Dizzy Gillespie Alumni All Star Band on a two-week tour of Lebanon and Europe, including Baalbeck Festival (Lebanon), Festivals and concerts in Gothenberg and Upsala, Sweden, Wolfsburg, Germany, Cardiff, Wales (UK), Antwerp, Belgium, Aug, 2 - 16, 2005.
• The Stanley Cowell Trio performed on a week-long tour of France for two nights in Paris at Sunside July 22 and 23, 2005, and i concert at Festival La Seyne Sur Mer, July 25, and at Jazz Festival Foix. Stanley's daughter, Sunny, joined him on every set performing on viola and singing his original songs.
• met with Steinway & Sons V.P. Peter Goodrich and new Concert & Artists Relations Director, Bonnie Barrett to be officially welcomed onto the Steinway International Artist Roster, 4/25/05.
• has received a Philadelphia Music Project Grant for 2005 funded by Pew Charitable Trust to create an original musical composition for performance Dec. 2, 2005 at the Philadelphia Art Museum.
• co-sponsored with Rutgers Department of History and introduced lecture/demo by Columbia professor composer-trombonist George Lewis on sociological and computer technological aspects of improvisation, Nicholas Rehearsal Hall, Feb. 23, 2005.
• lectured and demonstrated teaching methods and musical skills desired by the music faculty at MGSA for "Students Aspiring to Major In Music in College," to the Southern New Jersey Music Teachers Association, at Jacobs Music, Cherry Hill, NJ Feb. 22, 2005.
• Stanley Cowell and Julianne Baird performed his song, "This Life," on the "Peace Piano," and participated in a taped interview with station hosts, Jill Pasternak and Bob Perkins at Temple University's WRTI-FM, on Oct. 13, 2004. The taping will be aired as a part of Steinway's promotion of its "Peace Piano" world tour.
• The Stanley Cowell Quartet with MGSA faculty Ralph Bowen and Mike Richmond, plus graduate drummer Chris Brown, performed a second Steinway "Peace Piano" Concert at Rutgers Camden Fine Arts Center in the Gordon Theater with guest soprano Julianne Baird singing an original song titled "This Life," composed by Cowell, on Oct. 10, 2004. The finale was the joint performance of an arrangement by Cowell of John Lennon's "Imagine," for Rutgers University Camden Madrigal Chorus, directed by Julianne Baird.
• The Stanley Cowell Quartet with MGSA faculty Vic Juris and Mike Richmond, plus graduate student Chris Brown performed a Steinway "Peace Piano" Concert at Burlington Township PAC (NJ), on Oct. 2, 2004. The "Peace Piano" created by
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Steinway & Sons is a unique piano celebrating Steinway & Sons’ 150th anniversary. The 9-foot, blond, concert grand, in a special designed cabinet -- edged with the flags of the world’s nations and three large doves on both sides and at the end of the piano clasping olive branches -- is touring the world to raise money for the World’s Children Fund under U.N.I.C.E.F.

- was featured as pianist with renowned Canadian flautist/saxophonist Jane Bunnett at the Montreal International Jazz Festival in a two-piano trio which included young Cuban pianist David Virelles. Sunny Cowell, Stanley’s daughter, joined in on viola and voice, July 8, 2004.
- The Toledo Symphony Orchestra gave the premier performance of Stanley Cowell's "Fanfare & Fond Remembrance," for brass choir and percussion, commissioned as part of the Fanfare Project in honor of the Toledo Symphony's Sixtieth Anniversary, April 2 & 3, 2004, Toledo Museum of Art Peristyle. "Fanfare & Fond Remembrance was composed in 2004 with fond remembrances of Cowell’s first piano teacher, Mary Belle Shealy.
- The Stanley Cowell Quartet, consisting of Rutgers-Mason Gross Jazz Professors Ralph Bowen, Victor Lewis and Mike Richmond, performed a concert at Crowell Concert Hall, Wesleyan University, Middletown CT, Feb 28, 2004. (corrected)
- The Stanley Cowell Trio performed a 90-minute concert in conjunction with a major retrospective exhibition of the art of Romare Bearden (1911-1988) at the National Gallery of Art, Sunday, October 12, 2003.
- was the featured pianist with the Charles Tolliver All-Star Big Band at Jazz Standard, New York City, in a two evening retrospective of Tolliver’s legendary 1970s Music Inc. big band recordings on Strata-East Records, Saturday & Sunday, September 27 & 28, 2003.
- performed as the featured pianist with Ralph Bowen Quartet at Univ. North Carolina, Wilmington, NC, March 29, 2003.
- performed as the featured pianist in concert for the Univ. of Massachusetts Magic Triangle Jazz Concert Series, at Northampton Arts Center, Northampton, MA, March 27, 2003 with Charles Tolliver's Music Inc. (Charles Tolliver (trumpet), Cecil McBee (bass), Billy Drummond (drums).
- was the featured pianist with Canadian flautist/soprano saxophonist Jane Bunnett in concert at John Addison Concert Hall, Harmony hall Regional Center, Fort Washington, Maryland, Dec. 7, 2002.
- performed his Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Rutgers University Orchestra at Nicholas Concert Hall, Rutgers, DC, New Brunswick, NJ, and at Burlington Township Community Arts Center in Burlington, NJ on Nov. 1 and Nov. 2, 2002, respectively.
- His Oct. 14th 2001 NYC Pro Piano Concert Hall solo piano recital - Part 2 "Piano Concerto No. 1" in honor of Art Tatum was the featured performance on National Public Radio's JazzSet broadcast by WBGO-FM(88.3), also streamed at www.wbgo.org, Sunday, Nov. 3, 2002 at 6pm and Wednesday, Nov 6 at 7pm.
- led the Rutgers-Mason Gross Jazz Professors with Professors Bowen, Juris, Peterson and Richmond, and singer Vanessa Rubin in concert at John Addison Concert Hall, Fort Washington, MD on Nov. 9, 2002.