

Big Brooklyn *Expanded Bio*

Bridging jazz, klezmer, rock, and groove, Big Brooklyn carries a progressive and inviting presence, exploring beautiful melodies while defining new boundaries. Awarded Semi-Finalist positions in the 2022 UK Songwriting Contest for multiple compositions on their new album, *Everyone Everywhere*, as well as being a jazz finalist in the John Lennon Songwriting Contest for a song on their first album, *Purpose*, this 5-piece group captivates audiences with a unique depth of passion in expressive melodies and harmonies from jazz and beyond, touching on the inseparable exultation and pathos of the klezmer sound, all interwoven over a fabric of jazz and groove that pulls all stops.

Big Brooklyn was formed by Willie and Melody Dornfeld. Having both been involved in music for a long time, they created a group that abandoned boundaries to write and perform music they love, that was sincere, passionate, and all-out, and which also brought together different styles in which they had been immersed.

Melody Dornfeld began classical music studies at a young age, studying with Dr. Ramon Kireilis, principal clarinetist of the Colorado Springs Symphony Orchestra, and later the esteemed and highly-recorded Andrew Marriner, principal clarinetist of the London Symphony Orchestra and of The Academy of St. Martin in the Field. She graduated from the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music, where she first met Willie, as the University of Denver's Most Outstanding Senior in Performance. While classical studies expanded and enhanced her technical skills, Melody yearned for another level of freedom of expression and creativity. She began studying jazz improvisation and later attended a klezmer performance which made a soul-connection. She designed a "Partners In Scholarship" research project titled "The Art of Klezmer Music" where she travelled internationally, attended camps, and studied with internationally renowned klezmer and jazz clarinetist, David Krakauer.

Starting off with being glued to the radio and making some sweet mix tapes, music has always been a magnet for Branford, Connecticut, native, Willie Dornfeld. In early years he studied with Ric Hadad, an active performer and teacher around New England, and spent countless hours of time in deep connection practicing, performing, and venturing through rock, blues, and funk with some his favorite Branford buddies. While resonating with rock and blues, he was also growing in his love of and skills in jazz. Earning his Bachelor of

Music degree in Jazz Studies Performance from the University of Denver, Willie studied with Denver greats Mike Marlier, Paul Romaine, and Colorado Symphony principal percussionist, John Kinzie. Willie's passion for music has continued to thrive over the years with regular live performances, composition, and continual pursuit of the art.

Big Brooklyn is named after a cliff on an inactive granite quarry in Branford where Willie and his friends spent many hours swimming while growing up. And, yes, it was big! The band began to take shape as Willie and Melody were joined by other fantastic musicians. Tenor sax player Luke Soasey is a passionate and virtuosic musician, well-versed in jazz and more. An outstanding improviser, Luke studied with many teachers, including Bob Mover and Stefon Harris, among others. Aaron Summerfield is a masterful guitarist, comfortable in any genre, from playing a sweet ballad to soloing in free and chaotic sections, and able to play passionately while instantly technically navigating the simple and the complex. Aaron earned his Masters of Music degree at the University of Denver where he was the jazz department's "Outstanding Graduate Student." Aaron is a full-time active performer, composer, and college music educator in Denver, Colorado. An accomplished bass player, Jo Asker, earned his Master of Music in double bass performance from Colorado State University and performs widely in the classical, rock, and jazz worlds.

More info and links at www.bigbrooklynmusic.com.

*"Serious talent in an eclectic and unique package."
-Avogadro's Number, Live Music Venue*

*"With a sound that laughs and sobs at the same time, Dornfeld on clarinet is a master of nuance. Her reed speaks in a universal language that needs no translation. These outstanding musicians have created a sonic supernova."
-Debbie Burke, Jazz Author*

*"The clarinet is used incredibly well, and both hits notes spot on and deliberately slinks up to them, showing very different techniques and lip control, adding a slightly laid back feel. "Lazy Environment" is worth many listens for Melody Dornfeld's [sic] clarinet playing, let alone the rest of Big Brooklyn. Sumptuous."
-Sammy Stein, Jazz Reviewer, Something Else Reviews*