

# Bios - The Queen's Cartoonists

## Official Band Bio

The Queen's Cartoonists perform music from cartoons! Pulling from over 100 years of animation from around the world, The Queen's Cartoonists bring animated films to life, perfectly synchronizing their performances with the films projected on stage. The band matches the energy of the cartoons, leading the audience through a world of virtuosic musicianship, multi-instrumental mayhem, and comedy.

Projections of animated films dazzle the audience, while the band re-creates original soundtracks note-for-note, or writes their own fresh compositions to modern pieces, all the while breathing new life into two uniquely American forms of art: jazz and animation. Tying everything together is the TQC brand of comedy - anecdotes about the cartoons and their composers, stream-of-consciousness humor, and elements of a musical circus.

Watch your favorite classic cartoon characters interact with the musicians on stage, and expect the unexpected from the Golden Age of Animation, cult cartoon classics, and modern animated films. Inspired by the cross-roads of jazz, classical music, and cartoons, TQC features Jazz Age composers like Carl Stalling, Raymond Scott, and John Kirby, alongside classical giants Mozart, Rossini, and Strauss (to name just a few).

The six members of The Queen's Cartoonists, all now residing in Queens, New York, originally hail from four continents. TQC has performed in wide variety of venues, including opening for the New York Philharmonic, selling out the Blue Note Jazz Club, a sold out residency at Konzerthaus Berlin, and an extended run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. They have been featured in over fifty publications, including The Wall Street Journal, The Chicago Tribune, The L.A. Times, The San Diego Tribune, The Houston Chronicle, NPR, Mashable, and on BBC Radio 3.

## 100 Word Bio

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## Individual Bios - The Queen's Cartoonists

### Joel "Sweet Sauce" Pierson - Piano

Joel Pierson is a composer and jazz pianist whose work straddles the worlds of jazz, pop, and contemporary classical music. He frequently uses humor as a means to engage audiences with new music. He has worked with artists of great repute (the New York Philharmonic, the Kronos Quartet), and artists of even greater ill-repute (Linkin Park, Ke\$ha). Wayne Newton told Joel he loved him, and Paul McCartney gave him a shoulder massage. He has performed on all seven continents (yes, even Antarctica), and as a songwriter was signed to Warner Brothers Records. His music has been performed by major symphony orchestras including Atlanta, Houston, Toronto, Cleveland, & The Philly Pops. Joel is the author of numerous music education books, including *You Suck at Piano*, *20 Piano Pieces for People with Emotional Problems*, and *The Nutsmacker*. He is a Yamaha Artist; he only plays Yamaha pianos and only rides Yamaha jet skis. See and hear more on his website: [www.joelpierson.com](http://www.joelpierson.com)

### Mark "Dingo" Phillips - Woodwinds

The descendent of a sheep-thief and a woman who baked her enemies into pies, Mark Phillips is the luckiest jazz immigrant in history. Upon deciding to move Up Over (what Australians call the US) to pursue great music and fewer deadlier creatures, Mark was told that in fact he had been born in the US, and already was, therefore, a US citizen. The hard part being magically taken care of, Mark landed in Queens in 2011. His strange musical journey started by studying classical saxophone, but has since morphed into being the best damn cartoon clarinetist to ever come from New South Wales. His instrumental accomplishments have not gone unnoticed, as he is now a Selmer Artist, ranking him among the best woodwind players in New York City. His bartending skills, while occasionally paying the rent, have proven to be less distinguished, as Australians have a natural tendency to over-pour and under-care about their patrons.

### Drew "Dranka" Pitcher - Woodwinds

New York City based multi-multi-multi-instrumentalist Drew Pitcher was raised in Michigan, close to Michilimackinac, which, by complete coincidence, is also his DJ name. After pounding the pavement with dope beats building his street cred, Drew dropped his true musical skill: being a world-class player of the tenor sax, alto sax, clarinet, bass clarinet, flute, and harmonica. Drew attended the University of North Texas where he performed and recorded with the Grammy nominated One O'Clock Lab Band, but dark economic times followed... Drew made ends meet by recording smooth jazz Christmas albums under the moniker "Montgomery Bruce", traveling the world seeking gigs on cruise ships, and performing with artists such as The Drifters, The Coasters, The Platters, The Tea Cups, and sadly, Wayne Newton. Having survived these travels, Drew now resides in New York, where he ferments malted barley and hops in his apartment.

### Greg "Eggs and" Hammontree - Trumpet

Greg Hammontree has been tinkering with music his entire life, sometimes at places like Radio City Music Ball, Symphonic Space, The Jazz Standards, Studio 55, Flushing Town Mall, The Bowery Bathroom, The Louis Armstrong Mouse Museum, and in Chinatown. Greg has a surprising number of dedicated fans in Italy, even though his Italian is "no es bueno." He has a reputation of being a fearless cartoon trumpet master, meaning he will take on any challenge, no matter how fast, ridiculous, or potentially dangerous. Greg received his Master's in Jazz Performance from CUNY, Queens College and is now a professional freelance trumpet player in New York City, #unemployed #whythetrumpet #blessed #hashtag

### Rossen "Chock Full" Nedelchev - Drums

Rossen Nedelchev is a professional drummer, producer and educator in New York City. He hails from Sofia, Bulgaria, and let me tell you, that's a helluva cab fare. His jack-of-all-trades mentality extends to musical styles as well, being an in-demand session drummer in the worlds of pop, jazz, funk, jazz-funk, rhythm & blues, blues & rhythm, rhythm & rhythm, and bluesy jazz. Rossen is the band leader for the rhythm & rhythm band Alter View and runs The Jazz Playground, a jazz outreach program for stressed-out New York City children. He also plays drums in the NYC pop/electronic band The Qualia. Rossen produces for a variety of artists and has a Graduate Diploma in jazz performance from the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. He dabbles in photography, long-distance running, and child-raising (ok that last one is more than a dabble).

## **Rotating Cast Members**

### **Malik "M" McLaurine - Bass**

Malik "M" McLaurine makes the most of his modern and mojo, mashing a meticulously modern mask with his makeshift manifestation on The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel (season 3, episodes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10). Just not episode 7. Don't watch episode 7 - Malik's not in it, so why would you specifically put on THAT episode? What's wrong with you? Malik's a great bass player: he's from Queens, he lives in Queens, he oozes Queens. He embodies Queens. Malik left New York City for college, but then came straight back to Queens. And here he will stay. Malik comes from a long line of bassists, and plans on passing on the tradition to his pet cat, "Kitty-chan".

### **Steve Whipple - Bass**

Steve Shinji Whipple was born and raised in Tokyo, Japan, and attended the famous Interlochen High School in Michigan. But after "Interlochen-himself" out of his apartment, he found a discarded pink gorilla costume and founded The Xylopholks, a ragtime xylophone and bass duo, famous for terrorizing lost tourists on subway platforms. Steve is a member of Postmodern Jukebox, but dreams of starting "Premodern Jukebox", a group of Renaissance enthusiasts who perform pop songs on period instruments. Michael Bloomberg once told him, "You look ridiculous", to which Steve replied, "Takes one to know one!" Well played, Pinky the Gorilla.

### **Tara "Tarabyte" Khaler - Vocals (Holiday Hurrah only)**

Vocalist Tara Khaler has performed on all seven continents, at Madison Square Garden, and at Carnegie Hall. She began her training in the prestigious University of North Texas's jazz department, but they wouldn't let her sing and dance at the same time, so she transferred to the equally prestigious Oklahoma City University's musical theater school. Tara is a rare New York City quintuple threat: singing, dancing, clowning, baking, and driver's-license-having. She will blow you away at the concert with her performing skills, juggle cupcakes in the lobby afterward (for charity), and then drive herself home. She has performed in every kind of venue imaginable, having spent her life touring in a swing orchestra, starring in musicals, headlining cruise ships, recording albums, and now performing music from cartoons. Tara is also the HOA president at her co-op in Queens, so behave yourself in the lobby, because she has access to the security tapes.