

# THE SAXMAN

As the son of a band director and a professional dancer, Doug Lawrence was indoctrinated into the world of professional music early on. It made sense that he went on to become one of the most iconic jazz saxophonists in the United States.

Lawrence got his start by auditioning for a band in Dallas while he was at North Texas State University, and realized that he had found what he wanted to do with his life. "I got my first gig out there, and here I am 40 years later, and it feels like the gig just never ended," says Lawrence, laughing.

As a tenor saxman, Lawrence played with a host of iconic names in the past—Ella Fitzgerald, Tony Bennett, Aretha Franklin, and Frank Sinatra to name just a few. But Law-

rence always stays focused on the present. "To be totally honest, I am proudest of the work I am doing now," Lawrence says. "It finally feels like I am starting to figure things out."

"Now," in this case, is Lawrence's work as the lead tenor sax with the legendary Count Basie Orchestra, as well as the work he is doing in New Mexico. Though it likely won't see release until 2018—in order to accommodate the busy schedules involved—Lawrence has kept himself busy masterminding a collaboration CD with an all-New Mexican lineup, looking to play New Mexico's own style of Latin jazz, and highlighting local talents.

But when it comes to his own remarkable talents, Lawrence remains unflappably humble. "I like to think my biggest, lasting impact will be as a teacher," says Lawrence, who is taking on more students to whom he'll

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share his years of experience. "I cut my teeth in New York City. It's a hard education to come by, and I would like to pass that along."

For all up-and-comers in any field, though, Lawrence has this advice: "Find that thing you love, and believe in yourself. Do that, and you'll accomplish great things."



PHOTO BY DEE ASKEW