

Described as being “...fiendishly precise...” (*pitchfork.com*), Toronto based Canadian Nico Dann has been playing drums for over 15 years. Besides composing/arranging for and leading his own jazz and improvised music ensembles in Toronto and New York City, Nico has played and recorded with chart-topping indie luminary *tUnE-yArDs* (4AD Records), Montreal-based ex-indie band *Sister Suvi* and many other artists and bands. Nico has performed at various festivals including the *North Sea Jazz Festival* in the Netherlands, Montreal’s *Off Jazz Festival* and *POP Montreal*, Austin’s *South by Southwest*, England’s *Glastonbury Festival*, New York’s *CMJ Festival* and the *Distillery Jazz Festival* in Toronto. Nico has also played at many world-renowned venues including New York’s the *Bowery Ballroom*, *Rockwood Music Hall*, *Rockshop* and *Sidewalk Café*, Toronto’s *The Rex*, Montreal’s *The Upstairs*, Edinburgh’s *The Jazz Bar* and *The Living Arts Center* in Philadelphia.

Although Nico’s primary output has been in the jazz and indie-rock idioms, he has had the opportunity to play with ensembles in many musical contexts. Nico made his Contemporary-Classical Music debut playing the music of Peter Lieberon with violist-father Steven Dann and bassist Joel Quarrington at Ottawa’s National Arts Centre in 2008. In 2010 Nico performed the Musical-Theatre compositions of Bram Gielen in Toronto’s *Summerworks* “Indie Theatre and Arts Festival”. Lately Nico has been one third of Contemporary Blue-Grass Band *The Alex Mallett Band*.

Born in Amsterdam to Canadian, musician parents, Nico grew up in Toronto, Canada where he began studying music at an early age. Beginning with piano study at age 8 he moved onto the drums at age 13, studying with Toronto’s Dave Patel and world-renowned jazz drum instructor Jim Blackley. In 2006, Nico graduated from McGill University in Montreal with a Bachelor of Music in Jazz under Chris McCann, Michel Lambert and Rémi Bolduc and attended Canada’s Banff International Workshop on Jazz and Creative Music studying with New York Jazz greats Dave Douglas, Clarence Penn, Gerald Cleaver and Scott Colley among many other notable players. In 2011 Nico earned an MA in Jazz Performance from CUNY Queen’s College in New York City, studying with famed jazz drummer Nasheet Waits, alto-saxophonist Antonio Hart, trumpeter/arranger Michael Mossman and pianist David Berkman among others. Nico was chosen to attend the Banff Centre again this winter (2014) to participate in a 3-week composition residency.

Over the years, Nico has put in a lot of time in the recording studio both as a leader/co-leader and appears as a sideman on more than 20 releases. Notable appearances include, as a leader, *Sister Suvi’s Now I Am Champion* (2009, Common Cloud) and *Rhododendron’s Double Stuf* (2012, independent) and, as a sideman, *The Jessica Stuart Few’s Two Sides to Every Story* (2013, independent), and *Bernice’s What Was That* (2011, independent).

As well as being a performer, composer, recording artist and arranger, Nico has found a love for teaching and has held numerous positions as a teaching artist, maintaining a teaching studio and giving master classes and clinics both in Canada and the US.

As well as leading his own jazz ensemble *Rhododendron* Nico is currently working on two new projects with his wife soprano Ilana Zarankin. *Elephant Ear* is an indie-folk band featuring co-written music by Dann and Zarankin. *Shepherds Heard* is an ensemble dedicated to performing folk-jazz arrangements of post-19<sup>th</sup>c. classical vocal repertoire.