

## *Alumni achievement*

### **Stefon Harris '91 – Hitting all the right notes**

Stefon Harris is living his dream.

The *Los Angeles Times* has described him as “one of the most important young artists in jazz.” He tours nationally and internationally as a band leader, has played in some of the world’s most celebrated concert halls, including Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, The Kennedy Center, San Francisco’s Herbst Theater, Chicago’s Symphony Center and the Sydney Opera House, and conducts more than 100 clinics and lectures annually at colleges and universities throughout the country.



After graduating from Albany High School in 1991, Stefon went on to Manhattan School of Music, earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music. While studying, he secured his first professional gigs with legendary artists Max Roach, Wynton Marsalis and Cassandra Wilson.

“My teachers in the Albany public schools recognized the passion for music early on and offered lessons and the chance to bring home instruments to practice,” he said. “Music education and performance in ensembles, like the Empire State Youth Orchestra, exposed me to other cultures and genres.”

The award-winning vibraphonist and composer has released six CDs, three of which won Grammy nominations. He has premiered commissioned works by the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall and the Wharton Center for Performing Arts at Michigan State University.

“The broad education I received in the Albany public schools has served me in all aspects of my life,” Stefon said. “A memorable math teacher transformed trigonometry struggles into a lifelong fascination with mathematics. As a member, and eventually captain, of the wrestling team, I learned important lessons in discipline, drive and healthy competitiveness.

“I was lucky to have a supportive family, a connection with church and youth organizations and a school district that guided me.”

#### ***Word of wisdom***

“I believe that you’re born with raw talent and intellect, but it’s the broader community – school, family, community organizations – that identifies this potential and provides the tools and opportunities to manifest it in a fulfilling and productive way.”

– **Stefon Harris**

- **Albany High School, Class of 1991**
- **B.M., M.M., Manhattan School of Music, Class of 1995/1997**