

Victor Haskins Biographies

Lengths: blurb (55 words), short (380 words), long (541 words),
full (1783 words)

Links and contact info:

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Blurb (55-word) bio:

Victor Haskins, a boundary-pushing multi-instrumentalist and composer, weaves immersive sonic tapestries that transport audiences to new realms of imagination. With influences from diverse cultures and a passion for storytelling, Haskins' performances are not just concerts but transformative experiences that engage the mind and soul, leaving a lasting impact on all who witness his musical wizardry.

Short (380 word) bio:

Victor Haskins is a boundary-pushing multi-instrumentalist and composer known for his innovative approach to both music and multimedia art. Growing up in a military family exposed him to diverse cultures, fostering a deep appreciation for global influences that permeate his creative endeavors. From a young age, Haskins immersed himself in literature, board games, and video games, nurturing a rich imagination that fuels his artistic pursuits.

Haskins' musical journey began at the age of 10 in New Delhi, India, when he first picked up the cornet in a beginning band class. This moment ignited a lifelong passion for music, leading him to compose and record his first album while still in his teens. According to *All About Jazz*, Victor Haskins has been referred to as a "visionary performer, composer, and...an incorrigible explorer."

As a performing artist, Haskins leads two main projects: Victor Haskins & Skein and ImproviStory™. Victor Haskins & Skein is an ensemble known for its original electroacoustic music, weaving together storytelling, philosophy, and African diasporic influences through masterful collective improvisation. On the other hand, ImproviStory is a solo endeavor where Haskins improvises cinematic soundscapes, transporting listeners on immersive auditory journeys.

In his recordings, including "The Truth," "Showing Up," and "Ikigai," Haskins showcases his versatility and depth as a composer. Each album is a testament to his commitment to innovation and exploration, drawing inspiration from personal experiences, philosophies, and cultural influences. His music encompasses a wide range of emotions and narratives, inviting listeners to embark on introspective and transformative musical adventures. "While wordless, Haskins' songs are like short stories (*Style Weekly*)" which transcend genre and speak directly to the imagination.

Beyond his recordings, Haskins is a multimedia artist, integrating sound with visual elements to create immersive experiences. He has received commissions from various arts and community organizations, including Richmond CultureWorks and Anne Arundel County Public Schools, to develop original, multidisciplinary works that explore social and historical themes.

As an educator, Haskins has shared his passion for music through masterclasses, workshops, and teaching positions at institutions such as the College of William & Mary, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and the Izmir International Jazz Camp. His commitment to education and community engagement reflects his belief in the power of music to inspire and connect people from diverse backgrounds.

Long bio (541 words):

Victor Haskins is a versatile multi-instrumentalist, composer, and improviser driven by a penchant for worldbuilding and interactivity, and celebrated for his boundary-pushing approach to music and multimedia art. Growing up as a military-dependent youth exposed Haskins to a kaleidoscope of cultures, fostering a worldview and creativity that know no bounds. His upbringing instilled in him a love for exploration, whether through the pages of books, the strategic landscapes of board games, or the immersive realms of video games. These early experiences laid the foundation for his future as a musical storyteller and innovator.

Haskins' musical journey began at the age of 10 in New Delhi, India, when he received a cornet in beginning band class. From that moment, he was hooked, dedicating himself to mastering the instrument and deepening his understanding of music. As he honed his skills, Haskins began composing his own music, eventually recording his debut album, "The Truth," at the age of 20. This seminal work showcased his singular vision of composing, improvising, and creating immersive musical experiences.

Throughout his career, Haskins has led two main projects as a performing artist: Victor Haskins & Skein and ImproviStory™. Victor Haskins & Skein is known for its original electroacoustic music, blending storytelling, philosophy, and African diasporic influences with mind-bending collective improvisation. On the other hand, ImproviStory is a solo endeavor where Haskins improvises cinematic soundscapes, inviting listeners on auditory journeys of the imagination. According to *All About Jazz*, Victor Haskins has been referred to as a "visionary performer, composer, and...an incorrigible explorer."

In addition to his performing career, Haskins is a prolific recording artist and composer, with three albums to his name: "The Truth," "Showing Up," and "Ikigai." Each album is a testament to his versatility and depth as a composer, drawing inspiration from personal experiences, philosophies, and cultural influences. His compositions range from scenic landscapes to emotional narratives, inviting listeners to explore the depths of human experience through music.

As a multimedia artist, Haskins seamlessly integrates sound with visual elements to create immersive experiences that transcend traditional boundaries. His works have been commissioned by organizations such as Richmond CultureWorks and Anne Arundel County Public Schools, exploring themes of social justice, history, and identity through multidisciplinary art forms. Most recently, Victor is exploring the use of computer programming to create audio- and data-reactive immersive and interactive experiences in conjunction with his musical and sound art performances.

Beyond his artistic pursuits, Haskins is a dedicated educator, sharing his passion for music with students of all ages. He teaches trumpet, improvisation, and jazz ensemble at the College of William & Mary, where he inspires the next generation of musicians to explore their creativity and expressiveness. In addition to his teaching roles, Haskins conducts masterclasses and workshops at institutions around the world, including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the Izmir International Jazz Camp.

Throughout his career, Victor Haskins has remained committed to pushing the boundaries of music and art, exploring new frontiers of expression and connection. His work transcends genre and convention, inviting audiences to embark on transformative journeys of the mind and soul. Whether through his performances, recordings, or educational endeavors, Haskins continues to inspire and captivate audiences with his unique vision and unwavering dedication to creativity and innovation.

Full bio (1783 words):

Victor Haskins is a versatile multi-instrumentalist, composer, and improviser driven by a penchant for worldbuilding and interactivity, and celebrated for his boundary-pushing approach to music and multimedia art. Victor views life as a game of curiosities, fostering connections between ideas and people through innovative means.

Haskins grew up as a military-dependent youth until his family settled in the United States, so Victor was always exposed to many cultures different from his own. Thriving in diverse environments and having his senses stimulated in novel ways was the norm for him: Victor's worldview and creativity know no bounds as a result. Victor has always been a lover of reading books and playing games—especially board games and video games. Engrossing himself in the text-based imaginary realm of stories—both fiction and non-fiction, the rule-based realm of board games, and the digital imaginary realm of video games helped to foster his robust and limber imagination in different ways. Victor's artistic practice “officially” began at the age of 10 in New Delhi, India—he received a cornet in beginning band class and instantly fell in love with playing and practicing it upon blowing his first note. Dedicating himself to practicing the cornet and deepening his understanding of music over the years led Haskins to compose and record his first album, and shortly thereafter he founded his primary ongoing creative endeavors.

Victor's two main projects as a performing artist are Victor Haskins & Skein and **ImproviStory™**. Victor Haskins & Skein is an ensemble that performs original electroacoustic music, threading together storytelling, philosophy, African diasporic influences, and masterfully sensitive, mind-bending collective improvisation. ImproviStory is a one-man-band where multi-instrumentalist/sound artist Victor Haskins improvises immersive, cinematic, story-like soundscapes for the imagination. According to *All About Jazz*, Victor Haskins has been referred to as a "visionary performer, composer, and...an incorrigible explorer."

As a recording artist and composer, Haskins has released three albums of his original music: *The Truth*, *Showing Up*, and *Ikigai* (all exclusively available to hear and purchase at victorhaskins.com/music).

The Truth features a quintet of acoustic instrumentalists exploring a range of scenery-invoking compositions. A few tunes that illustrate this are “Smiling with the Sun” (a groovy, funky foray that feels like basking in sunshine), “Winter Winds” (an energetic, Afro-Cuban tinged descent down snowy hills and icy terrain), and “Grey” (the embodiment of a hero fighting their way through a post-apocalyptic wasteland). Victor produced and released *The Truth* when he was 20 years old, and it remains a strong display of his singular vision of composing, improvising, and creating a signature experience as a bandleader and recording artist. “The Truth...could not have a more apt title. This is music: thoughtful, passionate, skillful, contemplative, life itself is contained

within the set. Isn't that what we would hope our music to be? The reflection of our lives?" (Grown Folks Music).

Although Victor had composed all the music that would appear on his sophomore album, *Showing Up*, just a year after the release of *The Truth*, Victor took his time honing and expanding his artistry for 6 years before he recorded and released *Showing Up*. This sizable gap was necessary for Haskins to develop proficiency with a new and powerful tool—the electronic wind instrument (EWI). Additionally, he had to formulate the ability to design his own synthesized sounds for the EWI, refine his process for modulating acoustic and digital sounds in a live setting, and organize and shepherd a new, dynamic group sound which these technological developments helped to make possible.

Showing Up—featuring Victor Haskins & Skein, with Randall Pharr on bass and Tony Martucci on drums—encapsulates Victor's development of a group sound featuring electronic sound design (via the EWI), live audio processing for both his cornet and EWI, and his classic hallmark of intricate ensemble interplay and cinematic story arcs within compositions. Victor produced this album during a period of intense personal development and soul-searching, which is reflected in the featured compositions. Some tunes that illustrate this breadth of emotional territory include "Touch" (an ode to intimacy in the form of a both delicate and impassioned ballad), "Spite" (a cathartic investigation of malice featuring a glitchy and processed cornet battling the drums melodically and rhythmically with bass undergirding the harmonious fight), "Reliving the Past" (a reminiscence of childhood memories through a vacillating quasi-march/quasi-new jack swing groove, and melodies colored by a European classical sound and the Black American tradition of the blues), and "Psithurism" (a piece which evokes the feeling of being carried through the air by intense gusts of wind whilst flying in a barrage of leaves). *Showing Up* was a success. "While wordless, Haskins' songs are like short stories, and in this case the narrative is clear, as the music moves from gentle awareness to full engagement...Haskins has a strong individual voice, but it is too unpredictable to have set into a brandable 'style'" (Style Weekly).

"Ikigai" is a Japanese concept which loosely translates to "reason for living" in English. The music on this album is directly inspired by the philosophies that guide Victor's life and personal interactions. Richmond CultureWorks awarded Victor a grant for the 2021-22 season to produce *Ikigai*. His proposed methodology for production involved presenting a series of free, public concerts for the Richmond community—concerts he would record, and later mix and edit into a what would become the final product: a live album of original compositions. Several tunes from *Ikigai* which demonstrate its range and depth are "Alone with My Thoughts" (an ethereal, dreamlike exploration of space and stillness, and introspection), "Me vs. Me" (an energizing excursion into the idea of competing only with oneself), and "Everything Is a Game, Somehow" (a musical perusal of Victor's philosophy that everything is a game to be played, featuring the Afro-Brazilian 'aluja' rhythm, uptempo swing, and a hip-hop groove). "Ikigai is an absorbing and involving experience....With *Ikigai* Haskins continues his masterful journey—and

life's purpose, perhaps -in exploring and delivering musical worlds of wonder” (All About Jazz).

“Everything Is a Game, Somehow” is also part of a suite of 17 original compositions composed by Victor Haskins which borrow rhythms from the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé. This body of work investigates philosophies and stories related to the human experience, personal development, and interpersonal relationships.

As a multimedia artist, Haskins has presented his sound-based, multidisciplinary works via his ImproviStory concept for a variety of occasions and organizations. For the 2023-2024 season, Richmond CultureWorks awarded Victor a grant to develop a digital, interactive visual element with ImproviStory, tying together computer programming, visual art/new media, and sound art.

In February of 2023, Haskins conducted a residency at Sweet Briar College where he performed a concert with ImproviStory and worked with their music ensemble, Daisy's Harp, and the improvisational dance class. The College of William & Mary Library commissioned Haskins to create a new work, “FRAME”, to celebrate the new Arts Quarter at the university in 2022. This piece featured the confluence of improvised soundscapes, conversation with the audience, and new media.

In 2020, Richmond CultureWorks commissioned Victor to create and perform “Be/Flow”, a collaborative performance involving improvised soundscapes, improvised dance (featuring Meoleaeké A. Jones and Kevin Lamarr Jones), and new media created by Haskins. The Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) Performing & Visual Arts Magnet Program commissioned Victor to create an original, multidisciplinary work for their teacher professional-development seminar in August of 2019. His creation, entitled “The American Way”, examines lynching of African-Americans in post-Civil War America in relation to killings of African-Americans at the hands of police in the modern era. This performance was comprised of improvised dance (featuring Meoleaeké A. Jones), improvised soundscapes, theatrical staging, and new media

1708 Gallery selected Victor to present original, multidisciplinary works for their large-scale, light-based art installation (called InLight) for both the 2019 and 2020 events. For InLight 2019, Haskins presented “Chimborazo, in Every Sense of the Name (1865-1866)”, an exploration of the true story of Chimborazo as a refugee camp for newly-freed African-Americans in 1865 in Richmond, VA, and the conditions which precipitated the camp’s demise in 1866. For InLight 2020, Haskins presented a reimagined version of his previous work, “The American Way”. The new performance, “The American Way (Hindsight is 2020)”, reprised the ever-relevant material of the original presentation, and added content addressing the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hands of law enforcement. “Chimborazo” was comprised of improvised dance (featuring Meoleaeké A. Jones), improvised soundscapes, and new media, and “The American Way (Hindsight is 2020)” featured improvised dance (featuring Meoleaeké A. Jones, Kevin Lamarr Jones, and Christine Catherine Wyatt), improvised soundscapes, new media, and theatrical staging.

As an educator, Victor Haskins produces educational materials and conducts masterclasses and workshops. He teaches trumpet, improvisation, and the Jazz Ensemble at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, VA. Previously, Victor created and directed the In-School Jazz Ensemble for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. from 2014-2020, and served on the faculty of the inaugural Izmir International Jazz Camp in Izmir, Turkey. Haskins has given educational presentations at institutions such as the Jazz Education Network Conference, the University of Georgia, Virginia Commonwealth University, the Royal Academy of Music (England), Conservatoire Nadia et Lili Boulanger (France), the University of Richmond, Sweet Briar College, TEDxVCU, and TEDxLizardCreek, amongst others.

As a featured soloist and bandleader, Victor has been featured at the Henrico, Richmond, Elkhart, and Apex Jazz Festivals, the Kennedy Center REACH Opening Festival, the Richmond 2nd Street and East End Festivals, the Festival of New Trumpet Music (NYC), the Winter Blues Jazz Fest (Williamsburg, VA), and the Christopher Newport University Trumpet Festival. He has performed in venues such as the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Millennium Stage (Washington, D.C.), the W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts (Richmond, VA), the VCU Institute for Contemporary Art (Richmond, VA), the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA), Ewell Hall (Williamsburg, VA), the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (Baltimore, MD), the Jazz Gallery (NYC), iBeam (NYC), Résonance Café (Montreal, CA), Diese Onze (Montreal, CA), Snug Harbor (New Orleans, LA), the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban, South Africa), and Teatro SESI Rio Vermelho (Salvador, Bahia, BR), amongst others. In addition, some of Victor's activities are supported by grants from Richmond CultureWorks, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, and the National Endowment of the Arts.

Victor Haskins endorses Eclipse Instruments (the creator of Victor's signature custom black cornet), and Denis Wick Products (mouthpieces and mutes).

To hear Victor's albums, know when he will perform live, learn more about his latest projects, watch videos, access educational materials, sign up for his email list, and more, please visit www.victorhaskins.com.