

DAN FORSHAW

Biography, October 2026

FULL BIOGRAPHY

Branford Marsalis once told the young Dan Forshaw not to record a ballads album until he was over 40. He waited, through a decade that brought family breakdown, homelessness and legal battles, and *The Long Way Here* is the record he made on the other side of it. Released on 4shaw Music on 5 February 2027, it moves through Hoagy Carmichael's *The Nearness of You*, Billy Strayhorn's *Chelsea Bridge*, Wayne Shorter's *Infant Eyes* and John Coltrane's *Central Park West*, and closes on *Ti Amo*, an original written for his wife, Lydia. Forshaw, one of Britain's leading Coltrane scholars, launches the album at the Pizza Express Jazz Club on Dean Street on 12 February 2027.

The band is a story in itself. Forshaw taught pianist Lewis James, bassist Guy Dempsey and drummer Lewis Kentaro Isaacs as teenagers, in the advanced jazz ensemble he led on Saturdays at the Saffron Centre for Young Musicians, the Guildhall School's centre at Saffron Hall. Now they are his rhythm section. Becca Wilkins, a vocalist with albums under her own name who has worked with Forshaw for eight years, completes the quintet. *Ti Amo* is built on the Lydian mode: the ancient Greeks believed each mode held special properties, and Forshaw says the same of Lydia. The album was recorded at Curtis Schwartz's studio in August 2026 and funded on Kickstarter by backers he counts as his co-producers.

The long way began in Lancashire. Born in Blackpool in 1981 and raised in Fleetwood, Forshaw learned from Ray Wilkes, a fixture of the northern jazz scene who had played in Cedar Walton's band in New York. It was Wilkes who first put Coltrane in his ears. Forshaw was gigging at 14 and touring with the Amazing Blues Brothers Soul Revue at 16. In 2003 he met Branford Marsalis at the Royal Northern College of Music, and Marsalis invited him to study with him in the United States. In New York in 2005 he also studied with Eric Alexander and with Ravi Coltrane, the saxophonist's son. Marsalis has remained a mentor ever since.

Coltrane has stayed at the centre of his work. At the London School of Theology, Forshaw's research into *A Love Supreme* led to published writing on Coltrane's music and its theology, and in 2008 his quartet performed the suite in the college chapel. Through 2026 his Coltrane 100 programme took that scholarship on the road, to Saffron Hall, Peggy's Skylight in Nottingham, a homecoming at Matt & Phred's in Manchester and a standing ovation at the Mananan Festival on the Isle of Man. On 23 September, Coltrane's 100th birthday, he played it at the Cryer Arts Centre in Carshalton. In turning from that fire to the ballad he follows Coltrane himself, who set it aside to record *Ballads*

in 1962, and the album launch falls almost a year to the day after Coltrane 100 opened at the Pizza Express Jazz Club.

Along the way came London, Belfast and Cambridge. In Belfast he was artist in residence at Urban Soul, May Street Church, and toured with Yazz. He has made fifteen records since his 2003 debut, *Question 21*, and has recorded and performed with Tony Kofi, Juliet Kelly, Georgia Mancio, Steve Fishwick and Graeme Flowers. Few jazz musicians move as easily between the club and the cathedral. Forshaw has led jazz at St Paul's and Ely cathedrals and toured six UK cathedrals with *Passion*, a production fusing dance, poetry and music. Since 2015 Methodist Central Hall Westminster has been home to his *Jazz Vespers*, a story of lament and hope told through jazz, readings and song, which took him to prime time on BBC One.

He is as familiar to saxophonists as he is to audiences. His YouTube vlog, running since 2016, has reached nearly 700 episodes and more than 2.5 million views, and his coaching platform, *sax.coach*, has taught students on all seven continents, Antarctica included. His teaching website won gold at the Cambridgeshire Digital Awards in 2016, and he was named Premier Music Teacher of the Year in 2020. Until 2025 he taught saxophone at the University of Cambridge and lectured in music at the London School of Theology. He leads an annual residential jazz school in Taormina, Sicily, and has programmed the Foyer Jazz series at Saffron Hall since 2016.

Forshaw is a Yanagisawa and D'Addario artist and plays Syos mouthpieces. He lives in London.

SHORT BIOGRAPHY (ABOUT 100 WORDS)

Branford Marsalis once told saxophonist Dan Forshaw not to record a ballads album until he was over 40. After a decade of family breakdown, homelessness and legal battles, *The Long Way Here* (4shaw Music, 5 February 2027) is that album, with songs by Hoagy Carmichael, Billy Strayhorn, Wayne Shorter and John Coltrane and an original written for his wife. Vocalist Becca Wilkins joins a rhythm section of three players Forshaw taught as teenagers. One of Britain's leading Coltrane scholars, as much at home in a cathedral as a Soho club, he launches the album at the Pizza Express Jazz Club, Dean Street, on 12 February 2027.

ONE LINE

Saxophonist Dan Forshaw releases *The Long Way Here*, the ballads album his mentor Branford Marsalis told him to wait until his forties to make, on 5 February 2027.