One to Watch — Anthony Rankin

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With three independent albums, a handful of downloadable offerings and abundant praise from music critics, Anthony Rankin is drawing attention and gaining fans.

Rankin graduated in 2006 with a Bachelor of Music Technology/Sound Recording degree. In his years at Duquesne, members of the faculty like Mark Koch, assistant chair of guitar, noticed Rankin’s talent and drive. “Anthony was a talented, resourceful, self-motivated, and reliable student,” Koch, who was Rankin’s guitar teacher, said. “Even as a freshman he already acquired the discipline to function effectively as a performer and songwriter.”

Rankin, whose father was the drummer in the Iron City Houserockers, more or less grew up in the music business, so from a tender age he knew that even a modicum of success exacted a great deal of hard work. While still a high school student, Rankin, Koch recalled, was already taking guitar classes at Duquesne, writing songs and performing.

Koch finds Rankin’s multi-instrumental talent and work ethic impressive, but he also pointed out that Rankin has a good head for business—more and more an essential part of a musician’s success.

As strong as Rankin is as a performer, he found other ways to make his mark, too. Right out of college, he began working at the award-winning Studio L in Weirton, West Virginia, and has since honed his skills as a session player, writer and producer.

Koch, who started playing in Pittsburgh-area clubs while still in high school, has had a number of influential teachers, including Hoyt “Slim” Bryant, Joe Negri, Ron Anthony and Joe Carola. He studied jazz theory and piano with Robert Doak and composition with Mike Tomaro, the director of jazz studies at Duquesne University. Koch also studied with Pat Martino and appeared with him in the documentary film Pat Martino: Open Road.

Fans say Rankin’s music is best appreciated live, and his shows run the gamut from full-band showcases to intimate acoustic performances. He has shared bills with Elliott Yamin of American Idol fame, as well as Donny Iris, The Clarks, Bill Deasy, Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers and BE Taylor, and performed at major regional venues as well as at clubs and festivals in Cleveland, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Los Angeles.

Rankin disregards fixed musical borders, and his latest effort, Blow This House Down, mixes funk, rock, pop and vintage soul. Visit www.anthonyrankin.com to learn more about the recording and the artist.

Music School alumnus Anthony Rankin has earned the attention of fans and music critics.