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2017 Downbeat Student Music Awards Original Composition-Large Ensemble



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# DOWNBEAT 40<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL STUDENT MUSICAWARDS

# **Best Brightest** The Best Student Musicians of 2017

Theresa Chen of the Eastman School of Music earned an Outstanding Composition accolade at the Graduate College level in the category Original Composition–Small Ensemble.

### Welcome to the 40th Annual DownBeat Student Music Awards



**THIS SECTION IS ALL ABOUT YOUNG** talent. The annual DownBeat Student Music Awards (SMAs) provide a show-case for some of the world's most talent-ed young musicians—from the junior high level all the way up to graduate college students. We are proud to highlight and encourage the musical endeavors of all our competitors.

For 40 years, the SMAs have been a stepping stone for many of the world's greatest musicians. Among the noteworthy SMA competitors over the decades are such major artists as Norah Jones, Brad Mehldau, Maria Schneider, Chris Potter, Donny McCaslin, Darcy James Argue, Roy Hargrove, Zaccai Curtis, Jon Irabagon, Grace Kelly, Kendrick Scott and Aaron Parks.

In addition to the students who have become major jazz artists, and the hundreds of musicians who became jazz educators, there are thousands of SMA competitors who have benefited in other ways. For those who did not choose a career path in music, their studies helped them to become better listeners, better team members and better leaders.

Nowadays, when so many of our social

problems are compounded by one person or group's inability to view an issue from another, opposing perspective, we should all take a moment to reflect on the values that are promoted in a music classroom.

As students are learning about the technical aspects of making music, they also learn about democracy, equality, collaboration, cooperation and the development of invididual contributions that enhance the efforts of the collective. They also learn to respect colleagues who might have different backgrounds and opinions than they do. When students learn to perform in harmony, it is often in both a literal and a figurative sense.

So while we applaud all the great melodies, compositions and arrangements crafted by SMA musicians, we also realize that their work on the bandstand and in the recording studio often results in those musicians being a bit more empathetic when they are off the bandstand.

On the following 38 pages, you'll see the names and photos of some of the best and brightest young musicans on the planet. In the future, we know that you'll be hearing a lot more music from some of these gifted youngsters. —*Bobby Reed* 

### **Features**

- **100 JAZZ INSTRUMENTAL SOLOIST**
- **106 LARGE JAZZ ENSEMBLE**
- **114 VOCAL JAZZ SOLOIST**
- **118** BLUES/POP/ROCK GROUP
- **122 JAZZ ARRANGEMENT**
- 126 DOWNBEAT JAZZ EDUCATION HALL OF FAME: CLARENCE ACOX
- **130** DOWNBEAT JAZZ EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: PAUL CONTOS

**132** DOWNBEAT JAZZ EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: HOWARD STONE

**96** DOWNBEAT STUDENT MUSIC AWARDS—COMPLETE RESULTS

## EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC



Theresa Chen: "The Song of Taibalang" Original Composition -Small Ensemble Graduate College **Outstanding Compositions**  George Darrah: "Too Close for Comfort" Graduate College Jazz Arrangement Studio Orchestra

Jon Rarick: "Portrait of Jenny" Graduate College Outstanding Arrangement Studio Orchestra

Eastman New Jazz Ensemble **Dave Rivello** Large Jazz Ensemble Graduate College **Outstanding Performances** 

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### **Student Music Award Listings**



#### Jazz Soloist

#### Junior High School Winners

Henry Acker Guitar Duxbury Middle School Jill Norenberg Duxbury, MA

Matthew Lee Drums and Trumpet Glenfield Middle School Jon Ward Montclair, NJ

#### Junior High School Outstanding Performances

Daiki Nakajima Tenor Saxophone Moreland Middle School Dann Zinn San Jose, CA

Oliver Tuttle Trombone Edna Brewer Middle School Zack Pitt-Smith Oakland, CA

#### **High School Winners**

Alex Yuwen Tenor Saxophone Hamilton High School Eric Rasmussen Chandler, AZ

**Joseph Yang** *Trombone* Valley Christian High School Dr. Marcus Wolfe San Jose, CA

#### High School Outstanding Performances

Albert Newberry Piano North Cross School John Salmon Greensboro, NC

#### **David Sneider**

*Trumpet* Ardsley High School Alan Goidel Ardsley, NY

#### Performing Arts High School Winner

Petros Anagnostakos Drums Humber College Community Music School Kirk MacDonald Toronto, Ontario Canada

#### Performing Arts High School Outstanding Performance

Luca Mendoza Piano Colburn Community School of Performing Arts Lee Secard Los Angeles, CA

#### Community College Outstanding Performance

Arek Gralnic Guitar MiraCosta College Steve Torok Oceanside, CA

#### Undergraduate College Winner

Josh Shpak Trumpet Berklee College of Music Tiger Okoshi Boston, MA

#### Undergraduate College Outstanding Performances

**Cole Davis** *Acoustic Bass* Manhattan School of Music Jay Anderson New York, NY

#### **Howard Dietz**

Alto Saxophone University of North Texas Brad Leali Denton, TX

**Tobias Meissl** 

Vibraphone Berklee College of Music Greg Hopkins Boston, MA

#### **Henry Solomon**

Baritone Saxophone USC Thornton School of Music Bob Mintzer Los Angeles, CA

Graduate College Winner

Eitan Gofman

*Tenor Saxophone* Manhattan School of Music Justin DiCioccio New York, NY

Graduate College Outstanding Performances

**Chase Morrin** *Piano* 



Grammy winner Ted Nasl norable mention ac 1978 Student Music

# **DownBeat Celebrates 40 Years of SMAs**

The May 18, 1978, issue of DownBeat included a L cover story on Frank Zappa with features on bassist Dave Holland and baritone saxophonist Nick Brignola. On the cover, the "down beat" logo was two words, rendered in a lower-case font that screamed, "This is the '70s!" The tagline above the logo let everyone know that db was "the contemporary music magazine."

But that cover did not mention what would become one of the cornerstones of DownBeat and its dedication to jazz education-the Student Music Awards. In those days, they were actually called the "down beat Student Recording Awards," and given all of one-and-a-half pages of space in the magazine.

These awards prove that "from small things, mama, big things one day come." The goal was to create an awards program that could one day be as important to student musicians as the Grammys were to the pros.

Performances that year were adjudicated by a trio of jazz education royalty-David Baker, Bunky Green and James Williams. Baker was already making history in his post as head of jazz studies at Indiana University. Green was making his mark as head of jazz studies at Chicago State University. He would later become the chair of jazz studies at the University of North Florida. And Williams, who taught at Berklee College of Music at the age of 22, was serving as pianist and arranger for Art Blakey. He would later go on to head up the jazz studies program at William Paterson University. Those three jazz-education titans started a tradition of amazing adjudicators that continues to this day.

Some of the competitors went on to have great careers, like high school saxophonist Ted Nash, who received an honorable mention for solo instrumental performance. Today, Nash is revered as a leader and as a member of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

Other participants from the 1978 competition went on to do great things in the music business, like Jim Rupp, the drummer for The Ohio State University Jazz Ensemble. He toured with Woody Herman and Maynard Ferguson, and spent eight years drumming for Diane Schuur. But Rupp is probably best known as the owner of Columbus Pro Percussion, one of the nation's best drum shops, located in Columbus, Ohio.

And still others became teachers, bankers, lawyers, civic leaders and parents. If a person can learn to do one thing well, chances are they can learn to do many things well. Shining a spotlight on students who learn to play jazz well: That's been the spirit of the SMAs for the past 40 years. And it's a tradition that will continue -Frank Alkyer for many more.

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- DownBeat Jazz Education Hall of Fame, 2010
- John LaPorta National Jazz Educator of the Year, 2012
  DownBeat Student Music
- Awards Judge, 2016

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Jazz Orchestra, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Berklee College of Music Marco Pignataro Boston, MA

Shai Golan Alto Saxophone Manhattan School of Music Justin DiCioccio New York, NY

#### Small Jazz Combo

#### High School Winner

Tempus Fugit Ann Arbor Community High School Jack Wagner Ann Arbor, MI

#### High School Outstanding Performance

**Jazz Combo I** Folsom High School Curtis Gaesser Folsom, CA

Performing Arts High School Winner

Colburn Jazz Workshop Monday Night Band Colburn Community School of Performing Arts Lee Secard Los Angeles, CA

#### Performing Arts High School Outstanding Performance

Hamilton 'A' Combo Hamilton High School Academy of Music & Performing Arts Jim Foschia Los Angeles, CA

#### Honors Ensemble Winner

Thelonious Monk Institute National Performing Arts High School All-Star Peerto-Peer Jazz Quintet Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, UCLA JB Dyas Los Angeles, CA

Honors Ensemble Outstanding Performances

Advanced Jazz Workshop 1 The Jazzschool Community Music School Michael Zilber Berkeley, CA

**SFJAZZ All-Stars Combo** SFJAZZ Dan Zinn San Francisco, CA

#### Community College Winner

**Jazz Combo I** Riverside City College Joel Paat Riverside, CA

Community College Outstanding Performance

**Jazz Collective** MiraCosta College Steve Torok Oceanside, CA



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### **Jazz Instrumental Soloist**





# VARIED SKILLS YIELD REWARDS

**IN NOVEMBER 2014, TENOR SAXOPHONIST** Eitan Gofman returned to his native Israel to play in a big band that was performing the music of his countryman Eli Degibri. To take part in the concert, Gofman took a leave of absence from the Manhattan School of Music, where he was a first-year master's student in jazz performance.

As it happened, Mike Holober, who taught Gofman arranging at the Manhattan School, was the conductor and arranger for the Degibri project. Suddenly, Gofman was thrust into a work situation in which he had to perform as the colleague of a mentor, leading to a slightly disorienting realization: As a jazz musician, he needs to be broadly prepared for whatever comes his way.

Having earned his degree in 2016, Gofman, the recipient of a DownBeat Student Music Award as Jazz Instrumental Soloist at the graduate college level, takes an expansive view of his career. He has a weekly after-hours gig at Smalls in New York. He teaches at Jazz Empowers, a group that brings jazz into low-income schools. And he's busy creating compositions for strings that he hopes will get an airing at Smalls. In short, he is living the life of a multifaceted jazz artist in the 21st century.

"I can envision myself trying to push the music forward by balancing the writing with the playing and the teaching," he said. "Balance is important for every musician. It makes him more valuable."

Like Gofman, trumpeter Josh Shpak, the Jazz Instrumental Soloist winner at the under-

graduate college level, is developing a broad set of skills. While he impresses listeners with his playing, he is pursuing endeavors that complement his performing.

After finishing course requirements for his performance degree at Boston's Berklee College of Music, Shpak, who hails from the San Francisco Bay Area, decided to complete the requirements for another major: film scoring. He hopes to apply what he has learned to commercial work and film production.

"The trumpet is physically demanding and something that is a passion and pleasure to take on," he said. "But I also love writing and producing music."

This year's winners at the high school level seem similarly primed. Trombonist Joseph Yang, a senior at Valley Christian High School in San Jose, California, has, in his contributions to the school's big band, already shown an ability to "speak the language" of jazz, said Marcus Wolfe, one of his teachers.

Similarly, drummer Petros Anagnostakos a freshman at the University of Toronto who has performed in Canada's elite National Jazz Youth Orchestra—has distinguished himself with his leadership qualities, technical ability and artistic sophistication.

"He's got the entire package," said Kirk Mc-Donald, Anagnostakos' teacher and the director of the orchestra.

Meanwhile, drummer/trumpeter Matthew Lee, a winner at the junior high school level, already has a head start on a music career—benefiting from the advice of his saxo-







phone-playing relatives, father Mike Lee and brother Julian Lee. Julian is a former winner of a DownBeat Student Music Award and a student at The Juilliard School who has performed on Jazz at Lincoln Center's stages.

Matthew, who won the DownBeat award based on his work while a student at Glenfield Middle School in Montclair, New Jersey, is now a freshman at Montclair High School. He has also studied at the Jazz House Kids program in Montclair, run by singer Melissa Walker. The organization is known for opening doors for young artists.

Julian's success notwithstanding, Matthew said he knows that the doors won't open automatically. Nonetheless, with the examples of his brother and father, he can see himself living the jazz life: "I'm pretty set on living in the city, being around all my friends all the time and just playing music." —*Phillip Lutz* 

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#### Undergraduate College Winner

**The Oostende Quartet** University of Adelaide Elder Conservatorium of Music Dustan Cox Adelaide, Australia

Undergraduate College **Outstanding Performance** 

**Fusion Ensemble** Columbia College Chicago





Shai Golan, Manhattan School of Music, New York

Bill Boris Chicago, IL

#### **Graduate College Winners**

A.I.M.E. University of Texas at Austin John Fremgen Austin. TX

Lamont Small Jazz Group I University of Denver Lamont School of Music Steve Wiest and Eric Gunnison Denver, CO

Graduate College **Outstanding Performance** 

WMU Graduate Ensemble Western Michigan University Dr. Scott Cowan Kalamazoo, MI

#### Large Jazz Ensemble

#### Junior High School Winners

**Little Big Band** Caleb Chapman's Soundhouse Caleb Chapman Salt Lake City, UT

**Eckstein Sr. Jazz Band** Eckstein Middle School Moc Escobedo Seattle, WA

#### **Junior High School Outstanding Performances**

**Stanley Jazz** Messengers Stanley Middle School Bob Athavde Lafayette, CA

**Sutter Middle School** Jazz Band Sutter Middle School

Large Jazz Ensemble MiraCosta Oceanside Jazz Orchestra Community College Winner

Small Jazz Combo MiraCosta Jazz Collective Community College Outstanding Performance

Jazz Soloist Community College Outstanding Performance

John Zimny Folsom, CA

#### High School Winners

**AM Jazz Ensemble** Rio Americano High School Josh Murray Sacramento, CA

Jazz Band I Folsom High School Curtis Gaesser Folsom, CA

**High School Outstanding Performances** 

Jazz Band Harvard-Westlake School Shawn Costantino Studio City, CA

Studio Jazz Ensemble I Westlake High School Brian Peter Westlake Village, CA

**Performing Arts** High School Winner

**Jazz Workshop Orchestra** Denver School of the Arts Dave Hammond Denver, CO



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#### **Performing Arts** High School Outstanding **Performances**

Jazz Band Las Vegas Academy of the Arts Patrick Bowen Las Vegas, NV

**Jazz Ensemble I Douglas Anderson School** of the Arts

Don Zentz Jacksonville, FL

#### **Honors Ensemble Winners**

**Crescent Super Band** Caleb Chapman's Soundhouse Caleb Chapman Salt Lake City, UT

**Ellington Big Band** Tucson Jazz Institute



Henry Solomon, USC Thornton School of Music, Los Angeles

Doug Tidaback Tucson, AZ

**Precollege Big Band** Manhattan School of Music Precollege Jeremy Manasia New York, NY

**Honors Ensemble Outstanding Performances** 

**Jazzschool Studio Band** California Jazz Conservatory's



Jazzschool Dave Eshelman Berkeley, CA

**SFJAZZ High School** All-Stars Big Band SFJAZZ Paul Contos San Francisco, CA

*Community College Winner* 

**Oceanside Jazz Orchestra** MiraCosta College



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Small Jazz Combo **Community College Winner RCC Jazz Combo I** 

Jazz Arrangement **Community College Outstanding Arrangement RCC Student: Andrew Valenzuela for On Green Dolphin Street** 

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### Jazz Soloist

Undergraduate College Outstanding Performance Cole Davis, Upright Bass

Graduate College Winner Eitan Gofman, Tenor Saxophone

Graduate College Outstanding Performance Shai Golan, Alto Saxophone

### Large Jazz Ensemble

Honors Ensemble Winners MSM Precollege Big Band Jeremy Manasia, Director

### Latin Group

Graduate College Winners MSM Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra Bobby Sanabria, Director

**Original Composition–Large Ensemble** 

Undergraduate College Winner Matt Wong, "Golden Fields"

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### Large Jazz Ensemble





# **STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY**

**AS IN NATURE AND THE WORKPLACE, THE** "strength in diversity" principle is reflected on the bandstand with this year's Large Jazz Ensemble winners.

While there isn't a jazz studies major at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, one wouldn't know it from the level of activity on campus and around town, says Connor Pietrzak. A member of Jazz Ensemble I, the trumpeter noted that most every section in this group includes both sophomores and non-music majors.

Some of Pietrzak's bandmates major in chemistry, education, computer science and business, he noted. "For 30 years, jazz ensembles were the only things taught here," he said. "But the people at this school take it upon themselves to form jazz combos and r&b and hip-hop groups. The scene in Eau Claire is alive, because it's hugely infused by students playing at different places in town."

Students can take a jazz improvisation course as part of the curriculum, and several members of the music staff are excellent jazz players and educators, Pietrzak said.

Given the shorter-term nature of community college, saxophonist Josias Miguel of the MiraCosta Oceanside Jazz Orchestra (MOJO) at MiraCosta College in Southern California, confirmed that the group experiences periodic shifts in personnel. "We get new members almost every semester because people have class conflicts or are transferring out" to fouryear colleges and universities, he said.

Steve Torok, who directs MOJO and serves as the chair of the music department at MiraCosta, established goals for the group. "The way it works is that [Torok] sets a theme, and we work around it," Miguel explained. "It was Latin this semester, so we pulled out music that has Latin themes or rhythms. And at the beginning of the year, we were going to New Orleans. So we tried funk, straightahead and second-line."

At the high school level, diversity came in the form of age, as evidenced by the Jazz Workshop Orchestra, the performing arts high school winners from the Denver School of the Arts in Colorado. "There are about seven seniors and probably as many juniors and sophomores," said Dave Hammond, director of bands at the school. "I've got a few sophomores who are just crazy good. It's really competitive now. Most of the seniors have been with me since sixth grade."

"I would consider the Jazz Workshop Orchestra to be one large family," proclaimed double bassist Gabe Rupe. "The people I'm making music with are the people that I'm getting lunch with, too, regardless of grade."

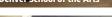
"Gabe's been with the program since ninth grade and has done amazing things, including the Vail Jazz Workshop," Hammond beamed.

One of this year's high school winners, AM Jazz Ensemble at Rio Americano High School in Sacramento, California, also has students of various ages collaborating on the bandstand. "Right now it's exactly half seniors, a couple of freshman and sophomores and a lot of juniors," said Josh Murray, band director for the AM Jazz Ensemble. "We have three levels of jazz band. Anyone who rises up is pretty good."

AM Jazz Ensemble pianist Nick Augusta and baritone saxophonist Duncan McElman were both recognized as Outstanding Soloists at this year's Charles Mingus High School Competition, which took place in New York. "Duncan is the kind of musician that every teacher loves to have," Murray said.

Augusta was a trumpeter when he first auditioned but switched to fill a vacant piano chair. "Now he's our best pianist," Murray said.







"Nick is a super-supportive player and also really grounded both musically and personality-wise, which is especially important in a band setting," McElman observed of his bandmate. "He's also very insanely talented as a writer."

"Duncan brings a lot of energy to the music," Augusta reflected. "He's really passionate about what he plays and is very dedicated."

This year's other winner at the high school level is Jazz Band I at Folsom High School in Folsom, California. The ensemble is led by the school's music director, Curtis Gaesser, who was the recipient of a 2007 DownBeat Jazz Education Achievement Award. Jazz Band I has been a winner in the Large Jazz Ensemble category every year since 2014. —Yoshi Kato



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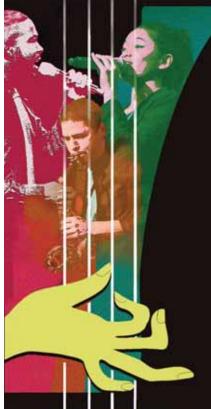


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Steve Torok Oceanside, CA

#### **Community College Outstanding Performance**

**Jazz Ensemble Riverside City College** Charlie Richard Riverside, CA

#### **Undergraduate College Winner**

Jazz Ensemble I University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Robert Baca Eau Claire, WI

#### Undergraduate College **Outstanding Performance**

**Get Jazz Orchestra** Senzoku Gakuen College of Music Yoshihiko Katori Kanagawa, Japan

#### Graduate College Winner

UNC Jazz Lab Band I University of Northern Colorado Dana Landry Greeley, CO

#### Graduate College **Outstanding Performances**

Jazz Orchestra Western Michigan University Dr. Scott Cowan Kalamazoo, MI

**Eastman New Jazz Ensemble** Eastman School of Music Dave Rivello Rochester, NY



The Standard Vocal Jazz Ensemble, Kansas City Kansas Community College

Jazz Ensemble I The University of Kansas Dan Gailev Lawrence, KS

#### Vocal Jazz Soloist

Junior High School Winner

**Brooke Lambert** Eckstein Middle School Moc Escobedo Seattle, WA

#### Junior High School Outstanding Performance

**Tessa Korver** Eckstein Middle School Moc Escobedo Seattle, WA

#### **High School Winner**

Emma Hedrick Carmel High School Michael Pote Carmel, IN



High School Outstanding Performance

Anson Jones Groton School David Lopato New York, NY

Performing Arts High School Winner

Rachel Webb Booker T. Washington HSPVA Kent Ellingson Dallas, TX

#### Performing Arts High School Outstanding Performance

Kaprice Maxwell Milwaukee High School of the Arts Raymond Roberts Milwaukee, WI

#### Undergraduate College Winner

Kaitlyn Williams Indiana University Jacobs School of Music Jeremy Fox Bloomington, IN

#### Undergraduate College Outstanding Performances

**Lia Booth** California State University, Long Beach Bob Cole Conservatory of Music Christine Helferich Guter Long Beach, CA

Peter Vode New England Conservatory Dominique Eade Boston, MA

#### Graduate College Winner

Jaime Van Der Sluys California State University, Long Beach Bob Cole Conservatory of Music Christine Helferich Guter Long Beach, CA The Eau Claire campus of the University of Wisconsin has one of the most well garded jazz studies programs in the country."

- New York Times

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#### Small Jazz Combo Undergraduate College Winner The Oostende Quartet

Jack Degenhart – alto saxophone David Goodwin – piano Dylan Kuerschner – bass Sam Millar - drums University of Adelaide Elder Conservatorium of Music Dustan Cox, Head of Jazz, Faculty Advisor, Adelaide, Australia

Vocal Jazz Soloist Graduate College Outstanding Performances Eliza Dickson University of Adelaide Elder Conservatorium of Music Lauren Henderson, Vocal Jazz Lecturer, Faculty Advisor, Adelaide, Australia

seek LIGHT



#### Graduate College Outstanding Performances

**Eliza Dickson** University of Adelaide Elder Conservatorium of Music Lauren Henderson Adelaide, Australia

Monica Pabelonio New England Conservatory Dominique Eade Boston, MA

#### **Small Vocal Jazz Group**

#### **High School Winner**

**Midnight Voices** Rochelle Township High School Cory Jones Rochelle, IL

#### High School Outstanding Performance

**Cary-Grove Jazz Choir** Cary-Grove High School Patrick Whalen Cary, IL

Performing Arts High School Outstanding Performance

**OCSA Vault Combo Rhythm Section** Orange County School of the Arts Dan St. Marseille and Charles Wackerman Santa Ana, CA

Honors Ensemble Outstanding Performance

**The New Standard** Student-Led Ensemble Various North Carolina High Schools

#### **Community College Winner**

**Jazz-ology** Contra Costa College Dr. Stephanie Austin San Pablo, CA



#### Undergraduate College Winners

**Vocal Jazz Ensemble** American River College Dr. Art Lapierre Sacramento, CA

**Vox Now** Sacramento State University Gaw Vang Williams Sacramento, CA

#### Undergraduate College Outstanding Performances

#### Improvisation Ensemble (Reggie Workman) The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music

Contemporary Music Keller Coker New York, NY

#### Vocal Jazz Messengers University of Denver Lamont School of Music Donna Wickham Denver, CO

#### Graduate College Outstanding Performances

Anna Jalkéus Group University of North Texas Rosana Eckert Denton, TX

**C-Sus Voices** Sacramento State University Gaw Vang Williams Sacramento, CA

#### Large Vocal Jazz Ensemble

#### Junior High School Winner

**Jazz Choir** Sinaloa Middle School Jason Eckl Novato, CA Junior High School Outstanding Performance

**Vocal Jazz I** Eckstein Middle School Moc Escobedo Seattle, WA Outstanding Soloists: Brooke Lambert and Tessa Korver on "Mr. PC"

#### **High School Winners**

**Jazz Choir I** Folsom High School Curtis Gaesser Folsom, CA

**Two 'n' Four** Valencia High School Christine Tavares-Mocha Valencia, CA

#### High School Outstanding Performance

**Take One** Niles North High School Daniel Gregerman Skokie, IL

#### Performing Arts High School Winner

**BTWHSPVA Jazz Singers** Booker T. Washington HSPVA Kent Ellingson Dallas, TX

#### Honors Ensemble Winners

#### 2016 Iowa All-State Jazz Choir Duane Shields Davis, Guest Conductor Various Iowa High Schools

Missouri All-State Vocal Jazz Ensemble Christine Helferich Guter, Guest Conductor California State University,

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S WINNERS FROM UMASS AMHERST DEPT. OF MUSIC & DANCE!



Winner, Blues/Pop/Rock Group (Graduate) – UMASS Jazz Ensemble I Jeffrey W. Holmes, Director



Winner, Latin Group (Undergraduate) – UMASS Vocal Jazz Ensemble Catherine Jensen-Hole, Director

#### Outstanding Performances, Blues/Pop/Rock Soloists (Graduate)







Christian Tremblay, Piano/Keyboards Dann Friedman, Tenor Saxophone

Michael Caudill, EWI and Tenor Saxophone

#### Outstanding Jazz Arrangement (Graduate, Small Ensemble) Michael Caudill, "Scarborough Fair"



department of music dance

#### UMASS.edu/music

Long Beach Bob Cole Conservatory of Music Long Beach, CA

Honors Ensemble Outstanding Performance

Vocal Jazz I Illinois Music Education Association District 9 Jim McCullough, Guest Conductor Algonquin, IL

#### Community College Winner

**Singcopation** Mt. San Antonio College Bruce Rogers Walnut, CA

#### Community College Outstanding Performance

#### The Standard Vocal Jazz Ensemble Kansas City Kansas Community College

John Stafford II Kansas City, KS

#### Undergraduate College Winner

Willamette Singers Willamette University Wallace Long Salem, OR

#### Undergraduate College Outstanding Performances

Advanced Vocal Jazz Ensemble Berklee College of Music Ned Rosenblatt Boston, MA

**OneVoice** Millikin University Steve Widenhofer Decatur, IL

#### Graduate College Winner

Northern Colorado Voices University of Northern Colorado Kerry Marsh Greeley, CO

#### Graduate College Outstanding Performances

Frost Extensions University of Miami Frost School of Music Kate Reid Coral Gables, FL

**Gold Company** Western Michigan University Gregory Jasperse Kalamazoo, MI



Outstanding Soloist: James Richardson on "Um Filme"

Pacific Standard Time California State University, Long Beach Bob Cole Conservatory of Music Christine Helferich Guter Long Beach, CA

Vocal Lab University of Northern Colorado Kerry Marsh Greeley, CO

Graduate College Outstanding Soloist

Elena Escudero on "Spokane Shuffle" IUnison Indiana University Jacobs School of Music Jeremy Fox Bloomington, IN

#### Blues/Pop/Rock Soloist

#### Junior High School Winner

**Easton Christiansen** *Guitar* Mountain Ridge Junior High Richard Bateman Highland, UT

Junior High School Outstanding Performance

**Tessa Korver** *Vocalist* Eckstein Middle School

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Vocal Jazz Soloist Undergraduate College Outstanding Performance Lia Booth



Vocal Jazz Soloist Graduate College Winner Jaime Van Der Sluys



Blues/Pop/Rock Soloist Graduate College Winner Loren Battley

# CALSTATE ONG REACH

Large Vocal Jazz Ensemble Graduate College Outstanding Performance Pacific Standard Time Christine Helferich Guter, director Large Vocal Jazz Ensemble Honors Ensemble Winner Missouri All-State Vocal Jazz Ensemble Christine Helferich Guter, guest conductor

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### Vocal Jazz Soloist





# **DRAWN TO JAZZ**

**NOT EVERY ASPIRING MUSICIAN GROWS** up surrounded by jazz. Indeed, for some, the path to discovering jazz can be indirect.

This year's Vocal Jazz Soloist winner at the junior high level, Brooke Lambert from Eckstein Middle School in Seattle, has been playing classical flute since third grade. "Singing has always been of interest to me," said the eighth grader. "And sixth grade was my introduction to both singing and jazz."

Lambert plays in her school's concert band and jazz band. She is also a member of the Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestra. She said she enjoys the freedom of improvising—"writing my own music on the spot"—and that her classical training gave her a good instrumental foundation for her jazz pursuits.

Lambert moves easily between worlds. At one of her band's concerts, she said, she might be a flutist for the first three numbers and a vocalist for the final three songs. "It's a pretty natural switch," she said. "And the two really complement each other."

Rachel Webb, the performing arts high school winner, spent only one year in the vocal jazz ensemble at Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Dallas. But she excelled and progressed quickly. Webb is currently studying musical theater at Texas State University in San Marcos.

"I can't think of anybody else who had that kind of [rapid] success," said Kent Ellingson, the Booker T. Washington music teacher in charge of jazz singing as well as AP music theory and jazz piano.

"I've always been in love with the sound of jazz," Webb said. "My mom used to play George Benson songs at home. But I didn't start seriously studying it until my senior year."

Webb spent the prior summer listening to recordings by the likes of Ella Fitzgerald, Lalah Hathaway and Charlie Parker before she dove into improvising. She said that in the fall she initially felt nervous trying to scat, but by spring she was completely at ease with the art.

The winner at the undergraduate college level, Kaitlyn Williams, enrolled in Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music as a classical voice major but then switched to jazz her junior year. "I really enjoyed singing classically for the challenge it is vocally," she said. "It's incredibly difficult—like working out, really.

"But I didn't love it, and I didn't listen to classical recordings outside of class," she explained. "Jazz, on the other hand, I was seeking out."

In addition to composing, Williams also enjoys arranging material from a variety of styles. One of Williams' Student Music Award submissions was a piece she had performed for her senior recital; it was composed by contemporary Brazilian singer-songwriter Djavan.

As a classical vocalist, Williams had long been comfortable singing in multiple languages, including Italian, German and French. But she was a little unsure about her pronunciation of the Portuguese lyrics in Djavan's song. So she consulted with a classical voice major who hails from the same region of northeastern Brazil as Djavan. By the time of the recital, Williams' colleague was impressed that she had successfully adopted the pronunciation and phrasing of a native Brazilian from that region.

Jaime Van Der Sluys, this year's winner at the graduate college level, was a vocalist in





her high school jazz band in Snellville, Georgia, from her sophomore to senior years. She then earned a bachelor's degree in jazz vocal performance from the University of North Texas. Next, she enrolled in a master's program at the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University, Long Beach, after meeting Christine Helferich Guter, her future faculty advisor, in Dallas.

When submitting recordings from her graduate recital, Van Der Sluys explained that she aimed not only for "songs that best represented me and my voice" but also her aesthetic. She wrote all her own arrangements: "That was important for me, too," she said.

A member of the school's vocal ensemble Pacific Standard Time, she enjoys performing with current music students as well as accomplished alumni who have remained in Southern California following graduation.

### Congratulations FROST Winners!

Large Vocal Jazz Ensemble Grad College Outstanding Performances Frost Extensions Kate Reid

Blues/Pop/Rock Group Grad College Outstanding Performances Frost Fusion Ensemble Steve Rucker

Latin Group Grad College Outstanding Performances Frost Salsa Orchestra Alberto De La Reguera

Original Composition: Small Ensemble Undergrad College Winners Adam Claussen, "All Bets Are Off" Gary Keller

Original Composition: Small Ensemble Grad College Winners Lucas Apostoleris, "Approximate Proximity" Gary Lindsay

> Jazz Arrangement Grad College Winner Big Band Rafael Piccolotto de Lima, "Jumble" Gary Lindsay

Jazz Arrangement Grad College Outstanding Arrangements Big Band Lucas Apostoleris, "Passport" Gary Lindsay

> Engineered Studio Recording Grad College Winner Rafael Piccolotto de Lima Gary Lindsay

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#### **High School Winner**

Anson Jones Vocalist Groton School Greg Dayton Boston, MA

#### Performing Arts High School Winner

**Charisma Carson** 

Vocalist Milwaukee High School of the Arts Raymond Roberts Milwaukee, WI

#### Undergraduate College Winners

Hao Jia Sun Guitar Musicians Institute Lyman Medeiros Hollywood, CA

Victor Johnson Electric Bass Guitar Lee University Dr. José Valentino Ruiz Cleveland, TN



#### Undergraduate College Outstanding Performances

Jonathan Barrett Saxophone University of Kentucky Miles Osland Lexington, KY

Sarah Burkhart Vocalist Cornish College of the Arts Johnaye Kendrick Seattle, WA

#### Graduate College Winners

lan Cruz EWI and Soprano Saxophone University of Kentucky Miles Osland Lexington, KY

Loren Battley Vocalist California State University, Long Beach Bob Cole Conservatory of Music Christine Helferich Guter Long Beach, CA

Graduate College Outstanding Performances

**Christian Tremblay** *Piano/Keyboards* 



University of Massachusetts at Amherst Jeffrey W. Holmes Amherst, MA

#### Dann Friedman

*Tenor Saxophone* University of Massachusetts at Amherst Jeffrey W. Holmes Amherst, MA

Mike Caudill EWI and Tenor Saxophone University of Massachusetts at Amherst Jeffrey W. Holmes Amherst, MA

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### WHAT STARTS HERE

### CHANGES THE WORLD

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#### Blues/Pop/Rock Group

#### High School Winner

**Cary-Grove Jazz Combo** Cary-Grove High School Patrick Whalen Cary, IL

#### High School Outstanding Performances

Midnight Voices Rochelle Township High School Cory Jones Rochelle, IL

#### Modern Music Ensemble

St. George's Independent School Tom Link Memphis, TN

#### Quincy Avenue Rhythm Band Kent Denver School

Steve Holley Englewood, CO

#### Honors Ensemble Winners

**Jukebox Antihero** Caleb Chapman's Soundhouse Evan Wharton Salt Lake City, UT

The Inevitables Caleb Chapman's Soundhouse Evan Wharton Salt Lake City, UT

#### Honors Ensemble Outstanding Performances

**Kingston Winter** Caleb Chapman's Soundhouse Evan Wharton Salt Lake City, UT

#### **Soundhouse Soul Project**

Caleb Chapman's Soundhouse Caleb Chapman and Evan Wharton Salt Lake City, UT Undergraduate College Winner

**Lushh** Western Michigan University Keith Hall Kalamazoo, MI

Unergraduate College Outstanding Performance

#### **Prussia** Musicians Institute Lyman Medeiros Hollywood, CA

#### Graduate College Winner

Jazz Ensemble I University of Massachusetts at Amherst Jeffrey W. Holmes Amherst, MA

#### Graduate College Outstanding Performances

Frost Fusion Ensemble University of Miami Frost School of Music Steve Rucker Coral Gables, FL

**Gymnoped** University of Toronto Nick Fraser Toronto, Ontario Canada

#### Latin Group

Honors Ensemble Outstanding Performances

**Caliente** Diaz Music Institute José Antonio Diaz Houston, TX

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### **Blues/Pop/Rock Group**







# FOSTERING A WINNING TEAM

**IN THE WORDS OF THE INIMITABLE YOGI** Berra, for some educators and students in the Blues/Pop/Rock Group category, "It's déjà vu all over again." The Cary-Grove Jazz Combo from Cary-Grove High School in Cary, Illinois, was named a winner at the high school level for the fourth year in a row. And among the honors ensemble competitors, two bands from Caleb Chapman's Soundhouse in Salt Lake City, Utah, added to the list of dozens of winners who have studied at Soundhouse over the last decade.

According to Maddi Vogel, drummer for the Cary-Grove Jazz Combo, the continuity of musicians in the group from year to year, plus the strong support of band director Patrick Whalen, have been crucial elements in the ongoing success of the band.

"I didn't start playing jazz until my sophomore year," Vogel said. "That's when I tried out for the jazz combo and became part of the group. [Bassist] Devin Sova, [guitarist] Josh LaSota and I had already been playing together quite a bit already. And when we started working with [trumpeter] C.J. Olsen, we just bonded really well—musically for sure, and outside the group as well.

"At Cary-Grove, every jazz combo records each year at a local studio, which is a great experience. I think we played the best we could at that session and really communicated musically."

The two winners for honors ensembles— Jukebox Antihero and The Inevitables—continued the winning tradition for Caleb Chapman's Soundhouse. The two combos are among the 20 different groups (made up of junior high and high school students) at Soundhouse.

The members of Jukebox Antihero are mostly junior high students, and The Inevitables are high school students.

"Jukebox Antihero plays a classic rock repertoire," said Evan Wharton, who has supervised bands at the Soundhouse for the past six years. "The Inevitables take contemporary tunes and put a vintage jazz spin on them.

"All our groups record, and we reset the



lineups every year so the students get to play a wide range of music," Wharton explained. "We review the recordings and pick the best ones to submit to DownBeat."

The winners at the undergraduate college and graduate college levels— Lushh at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo and Jazz Ensemble I at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, respectively—also benefited from strong music department support.

Lushh's saxophonist, Eddie Codrington, cited strong encouragement from the music department as an impetus for the band to submit recordings to DownBeat for this year's competition.

"I got together with Grayson Nye on keyboards, Andrew Saliba on guitar and effects, bassist Matt Epperson and drummer Madison George two years ago," Codrington recalled. "We all had classes together and we all had similar musical influences, like Kneebody, Donny McCaslin and Thundercat. Western encourages bands to submit every year. There's a fund to help pay for three to four hours of studio time, and our professors were really proactive, reaching out to [encourage] us to enter."

At the graduate college level, saxophonist Mike Caudill of Jazz Ensemble I at UMass Amherst cited strong support and collaboration from the entire music department as essential factors in the group's winning submission.

"The cool thing about the ensemble is that there's a lot of flexibility in instrumentation," Caudill said. "We often collaborate with other departments to pull in musicians who play violin and other string instruments.

"There's also a lot of emphasis on keeping things fresh as far as what we play. For example, Professor Jeffrey Holmes, who directs the ensemble, heard me fooling around on EWI [electric wind instrument] and encouraged me to incorporate it into what we were doing.

"We came up with a really crossover fusion sound, and it was good stuff that we really had fun playing. We ended up with enough good material to record for a submission."



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### **CONGRATULATIONS** *DownBeat* 40th Annual Student Music Awards Winners.



Kaitlyn Williams Vocal Jazz Soloist Undergraduate Gillers Winner Elena Escudero Outstanding Soloist Large Varal Jure Ensemble: Riniana



Connor Evans "Thoroughly a Rusted Life" Outstanding Geographics - Secal Ensemble

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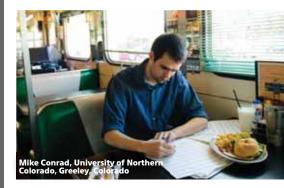
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#### Undergraduate College Winner

**UMASS Vocal Jazz Ensemble** University of Massachusetts at Amherst Catherine Jensen-Hole Amherst, MA

#### Undergraduate College Outstanding Performance

Improvisation Ensemble (David Schnitter) The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music Keller Coker New York, NY

#### **Graduate College Winners**

**Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra** Manhattan School of Music Bobby Sanabria New York, NY

**Christian Valdes Sextet** University of North Texas José Aponte Denton, TX

Pepe Valdez Quintet University of North Texas Fred Hamilton Denton, TX

*Graduate College Outstanding Performances* 

**Frost Salsa Orchestra** University of Miami Frost School of Music Alberto De La Reguera Coral Gables, FL

Mixcla + 1 Berklee College of Music Oscar Stagnaro Boston, MA

#### Original Composition – Small Ensemble

#### High School Winner

Alec Schulman, "Distant Sands" Crossroads School



Evan Avery Santa Monica, CA

#### High School Outstanding **Compositions**

Vincent Le, "Acacia" Harvard-Westlake School Shawn Costantino Studio City, CA

Kate Williams, "Disguise the Limit" Vanden High School Nicholas Cagle Fairfield, CA

#### **Performing Arts High School Winner**

Luca Mendoza, "Synergy" Colburn Community School of Performing Arts Lee Secard Los Angeles, CA

#### **Performing Arts High School Outstanding Compositions**

Evan Abounassar, "Enigma" Colburn Community School of Performing Arts Lee Secard Los Angeles, CA

#### Jordan Reifkind, "Dualism" Colburn Community School of Performing Arts

Lee Secard Los Angeles, CA

#### Undergraduate College Winners

Adam Claussen, "All Bets Are Off" University of Miami Frost School of Music

Gary Keller Coral Gables, FL

Adam Hersh, "Blistering" California State University, Northridae Matt Harris Northridae, CA

#### Undergraduate College **Outstanding Compositions**

**Connor Evans**, "Thoroughly a Rusted Life" Indiana University Jacobs School of Music Dave Stryker Bloomington, IN

#### **Michael Orenstein,** "Slow Coffee" Oberlin Conservatory

Dan Wall Oberlin, OH

#### Graduate College Winners

Juan Daniel Chaves Pinilla, "Not Even a Portrait" **Texas Christian University Blaise Ferrandino** Ft. Worth, TX

Lucas Apostoleris, "Approximate Proximity" University of Miami Frost School of Music Gary Lindsay Coral Gables, FL

Graduate College **Outstanding Compositions** 

Michael Spicer, "Calico" University of Nevada, Las Vegas Nathan Tanouye Las Vegas, NV

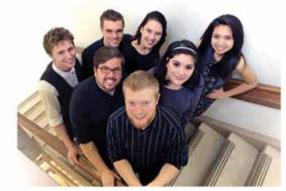
Theresa Chen, "The Song of Taibalang" Eastman School of Music

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### Jazz Arrangement



# **CREATIVITY IN COMMON**

**THE WINNING SUBMISSIONS IN THIS** year's Jazz Arrangement category included the reinvention of jazz standards as well as recent compositions, and were written for small combos, mid-size ensembles and big bands.

The common demominator in these diverse arrangements was the creativity that these young musicians brought to their work. But there are several other interesting parallels among the winners.

For example, Demian Coca Guzman, the winner at the undergraduate college level, and Pascal Uebelhart, the graduate college winner for small ensemble, both study at Hochschule Luzern in Lucerne, Switzerland.

Guzman, who was born and raised in Bolivia, chose Hochschule Luzern because he was able to take courses in both composition and arranging starting in his first year with faculty member Ed Partyka. "I knew [Partyka] was a renowned teacher of jazz composition and arrangement," Demian said, "and it was great I could start right away." Uebelhart earned his bachelor's degree at Luzern in 2014, then studied for a year at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz, Austria, where Partyka also teaches, before returning to Luzern to work on his master's degree.

These two musicians have another connection: Miles Davis' classic album *Birth Of The Cool.* Guzman's winning submission was his arrangement of the John Carisi composition "Israel," which Davis recorded in 1949.

"In order to apply for my master's, I had to write an arrangement for trumpet, alto and tenor sax, trombone, piano, bass and drums based on a jazz standard," Guzman said. "I chose 'Israel' because I love the melody, and I decided to use polytonal chords in my arrangement."

Uebelhart arranged "New Swing," a composition by bassist Morten Ramsbøl, for an ensemble patterned after the original instrumentation used on *Birth Of The Cool*, which included French horn. "I had never arranged for that instrument before," Uebelhart explained, "so I really wanted to make sure I gave that part room and attention."

Kate Williams, a trumpeter at Vanden High School in Fairfield, California, used a Davis composition, "Milestones," for her winning arrangement. "Kate actually wrote that arrangement for the SFJAZZ High School All-Stars Combo, an eight-piece band she's been in for two years," said Nicholas Cagle, band director at Vanden High. "What's impressive is that she can arrange for a variety of ability levels. She's a trumpet player, so arranging trumpet tunes was where she started. But in her arranging, she treats all instruments with respect."

George Darrah, the graduate college winner for studio orchestra, arranged "Too Close For Comfort" for the Eastman School of Music's Studio Orchestra (at the University of Rochester in western New York state).

"Eastman has a group modeled after the Metropole Orchestra as far as instrumentation," Darrah explained. "It gave me my first chance to arrange a great standard for a big band with a string section. And since it was going to be an instrumental arrangement and was a piece with no verse, I knew I could be flexible with writing the introduction. There was a lot of potential to put my own signature on it."



Rafael Piccolotto de Lima came to the United States from his native Brazil to study composition and arranging as well as production and recording. He enrolled in the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami, and over the past four years he's won Student Music Awards for both studio recording and arrangements.

The graduate college winner for big band, de Lima collaborated with vibraphonist Errol Rackipov to craft an arrangement of Rackipov's composition "Jumble."

"I really like to collaborate with other musicians," de Lima said. "The [Frost] Concert Jazz Band invited me to write an arrangement for them, and I thought 'Jumble' had a very unique flavor. In my arrangement, I tried to show off the strongest elements in the piece as well as imprint my personality. We were all very happy with the result, and decided to send in a recording. It's definitely an honor to receive the award." —*Terry Perkins* 



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#### High School Outstanding Composition

Luca Mendoza, "Hope Is a Thing with Feathers" Crossroads School Evan Avery Santa Monica, CA

#### Undergraduate College Winner

Matt Wong, "Golden Fields" Manhattan School of Music Jim McNeely New York. NY

#### Undergraduate College Outstanding Compositions

Joseph Genualdi, "Treelight" Lawrence University Patricia Darling Appleton, WI

**Demian Coca Guzman, "Italaque"** Hochschule Luzern Ed Partyka Luzern, Switzerland

#### Graduate College Winner

Claudia Döffinger, "White Note Exorcist" University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz Ed Partyka Graz, Austria

Graduate College Outstanding Compositions

Brock Chart, "Down to the Wire"



The University of Kansas Dan Gailey Lawrence, KS

**Emiliano Sampaio, "De Norte a Sul"** University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz Ed Partyka Graz, Austria

**Mike Conrad, "Union"** University of Northern Colorado David Caffey Greeley, CO

#### Jazz Arrangement

#### High School Winner

Kate Williams, "Milestones" Vanden High School Nicholas Cagle Fairfield, CA



#### *Community College Outstanding Arrangement*

Andrew Valenzuela, "On Green Dolphin Street" Riverside City College Charlie Richard Riverside, CA

Undergraduate College Winner

#### **Demian Coca Guzman, "Israel"** Hochschule Luzern Ed Partyka Luzern, Switzerland

Undergraduate College Outstanding Arrangement

**Gregory Santa Croce, "Dance of the Infidels"** University of North Texas Richard DeRosa Denton, TX

*Graduate College Winner Studio Orchestra* 

George Darrah, "Too Close for Comfort" Eastman School of Music Bill Dobbins Rochester, NY



Graduate College Outstanding Arrangement Studio Orchestra

Jon Rarick, "Portrait of Jennie" Eastman School of Music Bill Dobbins Rochester, NY

Graduate College Winner Big Band

**Rafael Piccolotto de Lima, "Jumble"** University of Miami Frost School of Music Gary Lindsay Coral Gables, FL

Graduate College Outstanding Arrangements Big Band

Gaia Wilmer, "Sete Anéis" New England Conservatory Ken Schaphorst Boston, MA

**Lucas Apostoleris, "Passport"** University of Miami Frost School of Music

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Outstanding Music Educator by Seattle Music Educations Association, 2004

Outstanding Achievement in the Arts Award from Seattle's Arts Fund, 2011

Seattle Jazz Hall of Fame, 1994

Co-Founded Seattle Repertory Jazz Orchestra, 1995



Under Mr. Acox's direction, the Garfield Jazz Ensemble has won every major competition on the West Coast as well as Jazz at Lincoln Center's Essentially Ellington Competition four times (2003, 2004, 2009, 2010).

www.garfieldjazz.org



### **Jazz Education Hall of Fame**

**Clarence Acox** 

Garfield High School, Seattle Washington

# THE MAGIC TOUCH

**IN THE SPRING OF 1971, WHEN CLARENCE** Acox was about to graduate from Southern University with a music education degree, his band director advised him to accept a surprise job offer from Seattle.

"Seattle?" responded Acox, who had grown up in New Orleans' Upper Ninth Ward. "I'm not going to Seattle. That's like the last frontier."

As pretty much everyone in jazz education knows by now, Acox—this year's DownBeat Jazz Education Hall of Fame inductee and recipient of a 2001 DownBeat Jazz Education Achievement Award—took the job. Since his first day 46 years ago at Garfield High School, Acox has led students to four first-place victories at the Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival, eight all-festival sweepstakes prizes at the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival and 12 European tours.

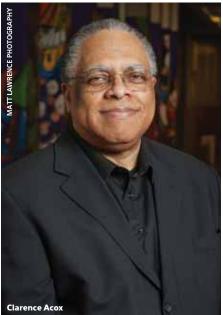
As Rosselle Pekelis, one of the Garfield band's past booster club parents, once put it, "He's got the magic touch."

Though Quincy Jones, Ernestine Anderson and Jimi Hendrix count Garfield as their alma mater, back in 1971, things did not look good there for jazz—or much of anything else, for that matter. Seattle had taken a huge hit when its then-primary employer, Boeing, shut down the controversial SST (supersonic jet) project. The real estate market had collapsed and morale in schools was low.

"I was recruited here to reorganize the band program," explained Acox, a friendly bear of a man with a New Orleans accent and a deep, commanding voice. "The principal saw my marching band [from Southern University]—we were playing for the Super Bowl—and he said, 'That's what I want. I want to start a band like that.' He was trying to figure out ways to bring back school spirit."

Acox revived that spirit by focusing on marching band and a funk-infused pep combo that then-student Clark Gayton recalls was a livelier draw to basketball games than the team. Gayton, now a busy New York freelancer (Mingus Big Band, Count Basie Orchestra, Bruce Springsteen), got the ball rolling for jazz when he and fellow students started gathering in the band room at 7 a.m., before school started. Acox and the principal formalized the group as a jazz band class in 1979.

Acox says jazz band never would have taken off without supportive parents like David and Helen Marriott, who organized a booster



club in 1990 to take advantage of an invitation to perform at the Montreux Jazz Festival. Acox typically deflects attention from himself to others, but there's no getting around the fact that his teaching skill is the main ingredient in Garfield's recipe.

"When he talked about Basie," says Gayton, "he would point out the details of swing and dynamics and tone production." A strong disciplinarian, Acox also "knew when to take a break and have us just listen to stuff. He'd play cassettes and we'd have these heated discussions."

Over the years, Garfield has sent swinging alumnae out into the world, including flutist and pianist Anne Drummond, who has recorded with Kenny Barron and taught at The New School and Manhattan School of Music; trumpeters Tatum Greenblatt (Mingus Big Band, Richard Bona) and Owuor Arunga (Macklemore & Ryan Lewis); and the Marriotts' sons Thomas (trumpet) and David Jr. (trombone), mainstavs on the Seattle scene. As Garfield's reputation spread in the early 2000s along with that of Seattle's Roosevelt High School, folks started asking if there was "something in the water" in the Northwest. But there's no magical additive, just a long history of great teachers. Waldo King started the first jazz band at Garfield in 1960, and other strong educators such as Hal Sherman, John Moawad

and Dave Barduhn have kept jazz in the spotlight. They have also passed the torch so that today, third-generation teachers at suburban schools such as Edmonds-Woodway, Mount Si and Mountlake Terrace are vying for honors at Essentially Ellington this year.

"It's competitive, but it's friendly," Acox says of his colleagues. "We share information, arrangements. When we go to New York to perform, Seattle kids cheer the loudest for us."

Regional pride is nowhere more evident than at Hot Java, Cool Jazz, an annual concert sponsored by Seattle-based coffee giant Starbucks that presents five high school bands and consistently sells out at the Paramount Theatre.

"Seattle has always been a good arts town," Acox observes. "People here have embraced jazz education."

That embrace extends beyond the schoolyard with Seattle JazzED, which Acox co-founded seven years ago to offer jazz opportunities to kids who for various reasons don't make it into the school stream.

"There are a lot of kids in Seattle who can play, but who can't get into Garfield or Roosevelt because they don't live in the attendance area or they weren't involved in the right program," Acox says.

Acox also co-directs the Seattle Repertory Jazz Orchestra, which he co-founded with saxophonist Michael Brockman in 1995, and plays in the Legacy Quartet, which celebrates Seattle's jazz heritage. Back in the day, he was also highly respected for his funk drumming in local group Elbowed Out. (His main squeeze is Basie, but don't be dissing Earth, Wind & Fire when he's around.) Acox also finds time to teach at band directors' institutes, including the one presented by Jazz at Lincoln Center, and judge competitions around the country.

Technically, Acox, who turns 70 in October, retired 12 years ago, but the parents keep bringing him back to lead the jazz band. He says he intends to keep coming back "until they throw me out."

That seems unlikely, though he does hope someone like saxophonist Jacob Zimmerman, a former student who teaches one of the Garfield ensembles, will keep the fires burning when Acox makes his exit. In the meantime, he continues to school young players in the intricacies of swing and to keep spirits high, as he was hired to do more than four decades ago. —Paul de Barros



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### **Jazz Education Achievement Award**

**Paul Contos** 

Education Director, Monterey Jazz Festival, Monterey, California

## WITNESSING HIS OWN LEGACY



**THE LIST OF MUSIC STUDENTS WHOSE** lives have been affected by saxophonist and educator Paul Contos is lengthy and diverse. A leader of the Monterey Jazz Festival's (MJF) various jazz education programs since those efforts were launched in 1984, the lifelong Northern California resident currently serves as the festival's education director. In 2009, he was named director of the SFJAZZ High School All-Stars.

The MJF's annual Next Generation Jazz Orchestra (NGJO), which Contos directs, has generated famous alumni, including trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire, tenor saxophonists Donny McCaslin (Contos' one-time private student) and Joshua Redman and pianists Patrice Rushen and Benny Green.

Contos, who wears many hats, also serves as a lecturer at the University of California– Santa Cruz and directs the MJF High School All-Star Band.

"Some of the students I have worked with are teaching now," Contos said by phone prior to one of his student band's rehearsals. "And we're starting to see the children of the people who have been through various aspects of my programs."

Surveying his illustrious career in jazz education, the San Francisco native recalls two examples where he was able to witness his own legacy. Trombonist Sam Griffith was one of Contos' students in Monterey and now holds a doctor of musical arts degree in jazz studies; he directs jazz ensembles and teaches courses at the University of California–Davis, Santa Clara University and American River College.

"We've actually judged some jazz festivals together," Contos marveled.

Pianist Eddie Mendenhall was another band member in Monterey back when Contos was first starting. His daughter, bassist and 2015 Student Music Award winner Kanoa Mendenhall, is an alumnus of the SFJAZZ High School All-Stars and the Vail Jazz Institute. She is currently studying at Columbia University as part of a Columbia-Juilliard exchange program.

"Paul's approach is disarmingly gentle and understated, with a genuine ability to bring out the best in his students," wrote Rebeca Mauleón, SFJAZZ director of education, in an email. "Over the years and through the many iterations of the SFJAZZ High School All-Stars Big Band, Paul has consistently found the secret recipe for working with high school musicians in a way that simultaneously puts them at ease while encouraging them to excel.

"Never one to badger or berate, his magic as a director is in finding a true synergy with his students," she continued. "They absolutely love and trust him and know that if they don't come prepared to give their all, it is ultimately Paul's disappointment that will motivate them to rise to the occasion."

When Contos was a high school student on the San Francisco Peninsula, playing in jazz band was for musicians like making the football team was for many athletes. "One of the coolest things was to be in the jazz band," Contos reflected. "That's why I'm such a big proponent of music in public schools: I was fortunate enough to be around some good programs. We had a wonderful director who was inspirational and informative. And if I look back, I realize he really allowed us the bandwidth for creativity."

The MJF NGJO takes an annual trip to Japan. It's a voyage that Contos has taken nearly 20 times. The SFJAZZ High School All-Star Big Band, in turn, competed in and won at the 9th Annual Charles Mingus High School Competition in New York this February.

"One of the main goals in taking students on tour is so they can experience what it's like to be a pro on the road," he said. "You have to learn how to sleep on a bus and be ready to hit a sound-check and then make that lobby call at the hotel." —Yoshi Kato



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#### **Jazz Education Achievement Award**

**Howard Stone** 

Vail Jazz Workshop, Vail, Colorado

## OUTREACH YIELDS REWARDS IN VAIL

WHEN HOWARD STONE HEARD DOWNBEAT was giving him a 2017 Jazz Education Achievement Award, he said, "I'm deeply honored, but I have to be very honest. This is an award that really should go to the educators."

Stone is the founder of the Vail Jazz Workshop and founder and artistic director of the Vail Jazz Festival. His deference isn't surprising: This is the first time the award has gone to a non-educator. But when you look at what Stone has accomplished the past 23 years, the honor makes perfect sense.

"Being the selfless person that he is," Vail workshop director John Clayton said of Stone, "he asks himself, 'How can I make a difference?' He's that kind of person."

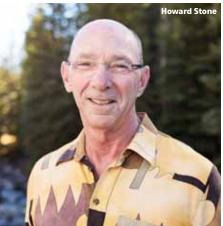
Stone started the Vail Jazz Festival in 1995 after retiring from a career as a real estate attorney in Los Angeles. A lifelong jazz fan, childhood sax player and skier, he was inspired by attending Dick Gibson's Labor Day Weekend jazz parties, which ended in 1992, the year Stone moved to his second home in Vail. After the first Vail Jazz Party, Stone said he "realized that this was what I was going to do with the rest of my life." The second year, Stone asked bassist Clayton to add the workshop, which now boasts a roster of alumnae that includes pianist Robert Glasper, saxophonists Grace Kelly and Tia Fuller, trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire, flutist Elena Pinderhughes and drummer Obed Calvaire.

From the beginning, the Vail Jazz Workshop was distinctive. For starters, students use no written music over their 10 days of study.

"Music is sound," Clayton said. "Too many students are learning the same kinds of theory and doing the same kinds of reading and the same kinds of exercises."

Vail's ratio of six teachers to 12 students is also unusual. Each year, the program accepts two sextets—rhythm section and three horns (saxophone, trumpet and trombone). The staff has been remarkably consistent. Clayton, pianist Bill Cunliffe and trumpeter Terell Stafford have been teaching since day one. Drummer Lewis Nash succeeded Carl Allen 17 years ago; Dick Oatts recently followed John's brother Jeff Clayton into the saxophone chair; and Wycliffe Gordon brought trombone into the mix six years ago.

Work days are long and intense. Before they even meet their instructors, students rehearse and perform a tune by way of introducing themselves. After that, it's 12 to



14 hours a day of composing, practicing and rehearsing. The workshop culminates in a performance by each sextet at the Vail Jazz Festival, as well as opportunities to jam with former alums and other professional musicians.

The financial structure at Vail is also noteworthy. Every student gets a 50 percent scholarship, and larger subsidies are offered on a needs basis. Vail reaches out to low-income kids, drawing on nominations from inner-city band directors around the country. This approach was informed by Stone's experience in Los Angeles, where he started a non-profit, Success Through the Arts, that helped South Central kids. He was also inspired by the late David Abell, a piano store owner whose generosity toward L.A. musicians was legendary, and by L.A. high school band director Fernando Pullum, who taught Stone that "you can only help kids that can help themselves."

Stone's outreach has paid off. To date, Vail has trained more than 250 students from 27 states and Canada, attracting as many as 140 nominations each year for its 12 slots.

Soon after starting the workshop, Stone instituted another jazz education program, Jazz Goes to School, which brings jazz history and basic participatory instruction to all 11 elementary schools in surrounding Eagle County. Summers, Vail also offers Jammin' Jazz Kids. In toto, the programs reach more than 1,500 kids annually.

Stone, 74, says he will probably pass the baton in a few years, though he will hang on to his position as artistic director of the festival.

"What a second act for my life," he said. "I never thought this was possible."

#### JUDGING CRITERIA

#### **PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

- 1) Overall sound
- 2) Presence or authority
- 3) Proper interpretation of idiom 4) Improvisation or creativity
- 5) Technique
- 6) Intonation
- 7) Phrasing
- 8) Dynamics
- 9) Accurate rhythm/time
- 10) Material

#### **ENGINEERING CRITERIA**

- 1) Perspective: balance of channels; amount and type of reverb; blend (Do all sounds seem to have been performed at the same time and place? Do solos seem natural or do they stick out?).
- 2) Levels: saturation or other overload, under modulation resulting in excessive hiss, consistency of levels, left/right balance, etc.
- 3) Transparency and apparent transient response.4) Special effects: Are they appropriate?
- Do they add or detract?
- 5) Extraneous noises, clicks, hum, etc. (for a nonlive performance, any non-musical sound).
- 6) Professional etiquette.

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Don Braden: Saxophonist, flutist, composer, arranger; Music Director, Litchfield Jazz Camp. Jeff Coffin: Saxophonist, bandleader, composer, educator/clinician

John Daversa: Chair, Department of Studio Music and Jazz, Frost School of Music, University of Miami. Orbert Davis: Emmy Award-winning trumpeter, composer, educator; co-founder, conductor of Chicago Jazz Philharmonic

Les Hooper: Composer, arranger for film, TV, commercials, orchestra and recordings; clinician. Fred Irby III: Howard University coordinator of Instrumental Music, trumpet instructor and Director of the Howard University Jazz Ensemble.

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Albert Rivera: Saxophonist, composer, educator; Director of Operations, Litchfield Jazz Camp.

John Santos: Percussionist, clinician, label owner; U.S. Artists Fontanals Fellow; writer/historian. Gregory Tardy: Recording artist, Assistant Professor

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Ryan Truesdell: Bandleader, composer, arranger, trombonist, clinician. James Warrick: Educator/clinician, former Director

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