



Here are some highlights of our winter & spring programs:

- In May, the Jazzschool celebrated **Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month** with a concert series and two intimate salon programs that welcomed an intergenerational group of performers, scholars, educators and audience members, in collaboration with **Asian Improv Arts**.
- In March the school showcased women bandleaders and composers for a concert series and lunchtime lectures in honor of **Women's History Month**, lifting up voices like Mary Lou Williams, Shirley Scott, Betty Reid Soskin, Joni Mitchell, and local artists Kasey Knudsen, Tammy Hall, and Anne Sajdera.
- Exciting new classes this spring included a **Music of Wayne Shorter Ensemble** directed by James Mahone; a rollicking **New Orleans Brass Band** for young musicians directed by Alli Torf; and a "**Future Jazz**" youth ensemble that combined electronic beats with jazz instruments.
- Our popular **Brown Bag Lunch Hangs** series has featured area musicians each Wednesday in free presentations about jazz luminaries, and continues through the summer in collaboration with **The Freight**.
- **The B3 Sessions** welcomed Hammond organ virtuosos for free monthly master classes presented with the **Jazz Organ Fellowship**.

Greetings Jazzschool Friends and Supporters!

I write this just shy of five months into my tenure as your Executive Director. What a wild and exhilarating ride this has been so far!

At the school, we just concluded our spring quarter **Student Performance Series**, a marvelous showcase of our community that encapsulates all we care about here—in its radical accessibility (55+ concerts free of charge!), the warm feeling of support, care, and curiosity among students, instructors, friends and family; and our consuming love for jazz and joy in sharing it.

Our **PianoLove** festival and fundraising campaign in April attracted new musicians, listeners, students, and donors to the school during Jazz Appreciation Month, and we were able to raise more than \$78,000 to support maintenance of the six beloved grand pianos in our space, as well as other improvements to our Downtown Berkeley home. Our revived concert series has focused on elevating Bay Area jazz talent, and has featured many of our esteemed instructors as well as our stellar high school students.

Thank you for being part of this vibrant and creative community, and know that there are so many ways to be involved here to help our school thrive—as a student, parent, donor, volunteer, audience member, board member, or Jazzschool ambassador. Pop by my office any time with your ideas and feedback.

Hope to see you at the school soon!

Lisa Mezzacappa
Executive Director



Jazzschool Studio Band

Welcome Charter Members of the GRACE NOTE SOCIETY!

The Jazzschool is thrilled to welcome new members to our Grace Note Society, a leadership circle dedicated to ensuring that educational and artistic excellence and community connection remain at the heart of our school for generations to come.

To learn more and to join, visit jazzschool.org/gracenotesociety

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**gifts/pledges as of 6/1/26*

OFFSITE Events This Spring

- The award-winning **Jazzschool Studio Band** played at The Freight alongside director **Dave Eshelman's Jazz Garden Big Band** on May 26.
- **Peter Horvath** and his students in the **Advanced High School Jazz Workshop** perform at jazz club Mr. Tipples Recording Studio in San Francisco on June 11.
- Local musicians and students gather weekly at the outdoor **Jazzschool jam session** at the Jupiter brewpub & pizzeria every Wednesday night in Downtown Berkeley.

The Jazzschool receives major support from JAMBAR.

Our institutional funders include the Hellman Foundation, the Eric & Simone Lang Foundation, the Koret Foundation, the Florence S. Beecher Foundation, the Zalec Familian & Lilian Levinson Foundation, the City of Berkeley Civic Arts program, the Berkeley Rotary, the Alameda County Arts Commission's ARTSFUND, and the Bill Graham Foundation.



Jazz Jams at Jupiter



Max Roston-Saul Sextet



SPOTLIGHT: A Parent's Perspective

With all due respect to Victor Feldman and Miles Davis, I think they got it wrong with this whole “seven steps to heaven” business. Based on my experience with my son Max, I believe there are precisely thirteen such steps – and surprisingly they go down, not up. That’s the number he takes from the pedestrian world of Berkeley’s Addison Street to the basement level of the Jazzschool, where a heavenly cohort of jazz-loving mentors and bandmates awaits him.

Surely I exaggerate, you say. But hear me out: for four years now, he’s played in Jazzschool combos that range from the small to the large, from the intermediate to the advanced. He’s worked with a great number of mentors (among them Howard Wiley, Erik Jekabson, Colin Hogan, David Eshelman and Peter Horvath), and he’s played with around 40 musicians his own age. And although each combo has had its own vibe – with variations, say, in levels of intensity or informality – there has also been an astonishing consistency across them. All his mentors have conveyed that, while jazz is serious music, it’s also seriously soulful and joyful. They’ve been attuned not just to the notes produced by the instruments but also to the overall spirit of the band, and they’ve fostered the best possible collaborative environment.

And those forty fellow musicians? They’ve all been teenagers, but somehow at the Jazzschool they don’t bear any resemblance to the portrait we often get of twitchy, phone-addled “kids today.” They’re not tuned out; they’re tuned in – open to what the music and their fellow musicians can give them. The Jazzschool cultivates friendship alongside musicianship, and so it’s no surprise that Max has made great friends over these past four years.

Soon he’ll be attending college – studying jazz piano and composition at the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music. (He’ll be doing so on a full scholarship, a result I directly attribute to the education he received at the Jazzschool.) But even though he’ll be 3000 miles away in a land of iguanas and Cuban tree-frogs, I’m sure that he’ll be bringing with him the spirit of the Jazzschool: a spirit that’s upbeat, swinging and, yes, heavenly.

Scott Saul

Parent of Young Musicians Program pianist Max Roston-Saul
Professor of English, UC Berkeley

Jazzschool NEWS

- High school students graduating from our Young Musicians Program this spring are attending college at UCLA, UC Berkeley, Frost School of Music at the University of Miami, San Jose State, Berklee College of Music, and Manhattan School of Music.
- The **Electric Squeezebox Orchestra (ESO)**, the Jazzschool’s composers big band in residence, made a new recording with resident poet **Avotcja** in May.



The Electric Squeezebox Orchestra

- Jazzschool instructor **Jean Fineberg** completed an artist residency for composition at the prestigious **Headlands Center for the Arts** this spring.
- Two of the Jazzschool’s Young Musicians Program youth ensembles were recognized by **Downbeat** magazine with awards this May: Max Roston-Saul won **Best Original Composition for Large Ensemble**, mentored by Dave Eshelman; and the Advanced High School Jazz Workshop I directed by Peter Horvath won **Best Small Jazz Combo**.



Winter & Spring AT A GLANCE

- **136** classes and **43** workshops ran in winter and spring this year
- **373** students enrolled in our Adult Program
- **119** students enrolled in our Young Musicians Program
- **158** scholarships were awarded, for a total of **\$50,000** in scholarship support
- **411** area students participated in **14** free clinics in area schools taught by Jazzschool faculty
- **1945** patrons attended concerts and free events so far this year
- **2400+** listeners attended the Student Performance Series this winter and spring
- **260** Bay Area jazz artists performed or presented in our concert and lecture series

None of This Happens Without Your Support!

Tuition pays for only 40% of the Jazzschool's costs to operate our school, keep our education programs accessible, maintain our Downtown Berkeley home, and support Bay Area jazz artists with competitive concert fees and teacher wages. Please consider making a donation today to help sustain everything you love about the Jazzschool, as well as new initiatives that will connect us more deeply with Bay Area communities.

Help us meet our match! A generous donor and longtime friend of the school is matching all gifts this year, unlocking an additional \$250,000 for the school if we can meet the challenge. Your impact is doubled!

To donate:

- Scan this QR code to contribute via credit card, Paypal, Apple Pay, or Venmo
- Visit **jazzschool.org/donate** to give online
- Mail in the form below with credit card info or enclose a check.



Count me in! I want to join the Jazzschool's community of supporters and help grassroots music education thrive in Berkeley and beyond.

Amount: ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ Other _____

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Contact development@jazzschool.org or 510-954-3450 with questions, or to make a gift via an IRA disbursement, donor advised fund (DAF), or estate plan.