

In a small classroom in Washington, DC, a teacher encourages a group of aspiring jazz musicians to reach deeper by emphasizing individualism and improvisation.

At the same time—in another classroom thousands of miles from the nation’s capital—a teacher in Seattle who grew up in the midst of the New Orleans jazz scene thrills his students with tales of playing alongside music legends.

all across the United States, teachers of extraordinary vision and expertise are captivating classrooms with rhythm and blues, swing and groove—and in doing so are inspiring the students who will become the next generation of jazz greats. In this special feature, representatives from *DownBeat* magazine, the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE) and other national jazz organizations speak out about these outstanding schools and their teachers.

■ Musicians to Admire ■

Students at *Duke Ellington School of the Arts* in Washington, DC, look up to Davey Yarborough, chair of instrumental music—both literally and figuratively. With a towering stature and warm demeanor, Yarborough evokes excellence from his students with firmness and consistency, as well as compassion and openness. His charismatic personality has motivated a *20/20* television profile and a profile in the *Washington Post*, while his skillful instruction has bolstered many students to success.

“You can tell when you watch Yarborough teach that he sincerely cares about bringing out the best in his students, and they love and respect him,” says Greg Carroll, director of education at the IAJE. “He can hold court with the best teachers in the nation, and he’s embraced by the community. He’s truly making a difference in the lives of his students.”

William H. Hall High School in West Hartford, Connecticut, also shares a coveted place on IAJE’s list of outstanding high school jazz programs. Jazz Music Educator John Mastroianni, a professional musician who fell in love with jazz at the age of 15, earned a placed among *School Band and Orchestra* magazine’s “50 Directors Who Make a Difference.”



How 13 Schools and their Teachers Are Shaping the Future

of JAZZ

Mastroianni continues to perform with his own quartet and to lead a 16-piece jazz orchestra for which he composes and arranges scores.

“Although the atmospheres in the two schools’ band rooms differ, the end result of both directors’ instruction is the same—student musicians who perform at the highest level of excellence,” says Carroll. “With such outstanding teachers, it’s safe to predict that each school will continue to produce professional jazz musicians who have the potential to achieve greatness and become household names.”

■ An Educational Celebrity ■

Having graduated jazz and pop celebrities Roy Hargrove, Norah Jones and Erykah Badu, the music department at *Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA)* in Dallas, Texas,

is well-respected by jazz aficionados worldwide. Under the passionate direction of Bart Marantz, the jazz program has garnered repeated recognition from *DownBeat* magazine, the IAJE, the Grammy Foundation and the Monterey Invitational National Jazz Festival—to name just a few. (For a special DVD review by Marantz, see page 45.)

“Marantz gives his ensembles the freedom to communicate music in ways that are far beyond their years. When I heard the jazz combo play, I was blown away by the individualism these young performers already display—it was breathtaking,” says Jason Koransky, editor of *DownBeat*. “Marantz’s brilliant instruction attracts serious student musicians and inspires them to excel in jazz fundamentals—from improvisation to composition. This is a teacher who understands how to get the best from young people.”

From Stage to Studio

Located in New York, **Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School for Music & Art and Performing Arts** continues to uphold its reputation as a premiere arts school in the world of jazz, thanks in large part to the comprehensive efforts of recording artist and educator Kevin Blancq.

“Blancq teaches not only big band techniques and styles, but also small ensembles, jazz improvisation, history, theory and ear training,” says Justin DiCioccio, assistant dean and chair of the Jazz Arts program at the Manhattan School of Music. “That breadth comes from a deep familiarity with the genre, and a passion that students understand and respond to.”

Having shared the stage with an impressive succession of jazz luminaries, including Dizzy Gillespie and Joe Williams, saxophonist William Sears serves as jazz studies and jazz saxophone instructor and conductor of jazz ensembles at **Interlochen Arts Academy** in Interlochen, Michigan. As a result, the school continues to graduate some of the finest young jazz musicians in the country.

“From renowned arts schools such as Interlochen Arts Academy to non-arts oriented schools, outstanding jazz programs are fueled by teachers who have lived the jazz life,” says DiCioccio. “Each educator brings his or her own unique style of presentation and teaches from years of performance experience.”

■ Elements and Exposure ■

Jazz students at *New Trier Township High School* in Winnetka, Illinois, find shelter for growth in Jim Warrick’s structured approach.

“A lot of people say you can best learn about jazz in nightclubs where the music is right in front of you, but there’s something to be said for learning in a calm, ordered environment—especially when you’re teaching teenage musicians,” says

Koransky. “Warrick conveys his profound respect for jazz music on to his students by providing specific, clear instruction, without ever using a cookie-cutter style that could be interpreted as repetitive. Everything he communicates is delivered in a way that captures a student’s attention and results in learning and excitement.”

While New Trier Township High School does not enter jazz competitions frequently, its jazz ensembles

Grammy in the Schools

The Grammy Foundation honors outstanding high school music programs and jazz musicians through two distinct recognition programs. The Gibson/Baldwin Grammy Jazz Ensemble program recognizes top high school jazz vocalists and instrumentalists. The Grammy Signature Schools program confers awards and grants upon public high school music programs that excel in a variety of genres. Schools are eligible to apply for Grammy Signature status on an annual basis. Please visit www.grammy.com/GRAMMY_Foundation for more information.



and students have collectively received 30 awards from the *DownBeat* Student Music Awards Program. Additionally, the school hosts an annual jazz festival that draws enthusiasts across the region to hear household names such as Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band and the Yellowjackets play.

■ Despite Their Differences ■

Longtime rivals *Roosevelt High School* and *Garfield High School*—both mainstream schools in Seattle—as well as *New World School of the Arts* in Miami, boast extensive involvement in Jazz at Lincoln Center's *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band program.

From 2002 to 2005, *New World School of the Arts* in Miami was selected as a finalist in the *Essentially Ellington*

High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival, while the Seattle rivals are tied. Both bands have achieved finalist status every year except one since the program's inception in 1999.

"We talk about jazz as a democracy, and I think the students from these schools truly understand that concept and appreciate how lessons learned from jazz—negotiation, improvisation and listening—can apply to their everyday lives," says Joanna Massey, education manager for Jazz at Lincoln Center's *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program. "The teachers at all three schools put a great deal of thought into what they do. They present jazz as a medium for self-discovery and communication with others, and the students respond."

As core members of the



- 1 William Hall Concert Jazz Band performance | photo courtesy of William H. Hall High School
- 2 New World School of the Arts | photo courtesy of New World School of the Arts
- 3 New Trier Township High School jazz student | photo courtesy of New Trier Township High School
- 4 Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts Jazz Combo photo by Bart Marantz
- 5 Los Angeles County High School for the Arts jazz rehearsal | photo courtesy of Los Angeles County High School for the Arts
- 6 Interlochen Arts Academy jazz ensemble performance | photo courtesy of Interlochen Arts Academy
- 7 Los Angeles County High School for the Arts jazz performance | photo courtesy of Los Angeles County High School for the Arts
- 8 New World School of the Arts jazz student | photo courtesy of New World School of the Arts

Hitting the Downbeat

DownBeat magazine's Student Musician Awards program began 20 years ago and is one of the only national awards programs of its kind. Each year, an all-star panel of adjudicators evaluates thousands of entries from the United States and Canada through a blind review process. Winning individual students and ensembles then receive formal recognition from *DownBeat* magazine.

"Many students have nurtured successful careers in music after having been recognized by *DownBeat*," says Jason Koransky, editor at *DownBeat* magazine. "Winning a Student Musician Award gives young musicians confidence and prestige and broadens their opportunities to win scholarships from noteworthy universities and conservatories." For more information, visit www.downbeat.com.

Essentially Ellington

Jazz at Lincoln Center's *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program encourages the study and performance of Ellington's music by disseminating his compositions to high school jazz bands. Bands choosing to submit a recording of selected Ellington compositions are evaluated in a blind screening.

All participating bands receive a detailed critique of their performances. Finalists attend a three-day festival at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall, the home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, for a "One-on-One With Wynton Marsalis." While there, they participate in workshops, rehearsals, a banquet dinner, an Ellington Alumni conversation and jam sessions with members of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. For more information, visit www.jalc.org/jazzed/ee.

Partnering to Propel Jazz Education

The mission of the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE) is to ensure the continued growth of jazz music and education worldwide. One of the many ways IAJE advances this goal is by partnering with NFAA to honor outstanding young jazz musicians through the Herb Alpert Endowment Fund's Clifford Brown/Stan Getz Fellowship.

Clifford Brown/Stan Getz Fellows attend NFAA youngARTS Week in Miami before traveling to perform several times in front of a veritable who's who of international jazz professionals at the annual IAJE conference in January. All Clifford Brown/Stan Getz Fellows receive financial awards from NFAA and instruction from some of the most respected jazz educators in the world. For more information, visit www.iaje.org.



High School for the Performing and Visual Arts' Jazz Combo with Warren Sneed, director of Jazz Studies | photo courtesy of High School for the Performing and Visual Arts

Full Circle Success

Saxophonist Warren Sneed—who remains active on the vibrant Houston jazz scene and continues to amass recording credits—directs jazz studies at his alma mater, Houston’s **High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA)**.

“HSPVA’s jazz studies program has already placed very strong instrumentalists in our program and continues to excel under Sneed’s excellent direction,” says David R. Sears, senior director of education programs at the Grammy Foundation. “The school began participating in the Gibson/Baldwin Grammy Jazz Ensembles fairly recently, and there’s every reason to believe we’ll be hearing about students from HSPVA on a national scale in the future.”

National acclaim for the jazz program at **Los Angeles County High School of the Arts (LACHSA)** has increased as well with Jason Goldman’s instruction.

“A large part of the school’s success stems from Goldman’s encouragement,” says Sears. “He expects his students to get varied experience outside of the school’s program through competitions, summer programs and festivals. This experience benefits the students tremendously as they emerge into professional careers.”

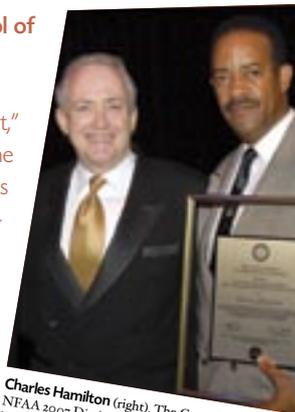
Alexander Hamilton High School Academy of Music, an arts-focused school nestled in the campus of a larger school in Los Angeles, has consistently placed vocalists in the Gibson/Baldwin Grammy Jazz Ensembles since the recognition program’s 1993 inception. The academy also teaches instrumentalists.

“John Hamilton, the school’s vocal jazz instructor, has years of performance experience and draws the very best out of each singer,” says Sears. “He displays a sensitivity to a young person’s individual strengths, and when you’re watching him convey instruction, you get a feel for how much he cares about each student’s success.”

“*Essentially Ellington* family,” Clarence Acox of *Garfield High School*, Scott Brown of *Roosevelt High School* and Jim Gasior of *New World School of the Arts* have helped shape the national Ellington program. However, each school’s jazz program bears the unique stamp and enthusiastic personality of its director.

“We call Acox ‘Papa Clar-

ence’ because he’s been part of the jazz scene since his youth in New Orleans, and he brings a rich history and a wealth of expertise to the music that his students genuinely appreciate. Brown is the ‘Energizer Bunny’ of jazz education. His unflagging enthusiasm infects his students with sheer excitement about every note they play,”



Charles Hamilton (right), The Coca-Cola Company/NEAA 2007 Distinguished Teacher of the Year, is seen here at NEAA’s *An Affair of the Arts Performance and Gala* in Miami | photo courtesy of NEAA

says Massey. “Gasior connects with students—many of whom plan to pursue music professionally—and provides real-life insights from his perspective as a professional performer. When you watch him interact with his students, you sense that they could talk with him about anything. You can feel the connection.” ☺

Setting a Standard of Excellence

The following teachers attract attention from the nation’s premiere jazz music organizations for developing or fostering award-winning programs.

Clarence Acox

Garfield High School
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Kevin Blancq

Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School for Music and Art & Performing Arts
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Scott Brown

Roosevelt High School
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Jim Gasior

New World School of the Arts
MIAMI, FLORIDA

Jason Goldman

Los Angeles County High School for the Arts
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Charles Hamilton

Berkeley High School
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

John Hamilton

Alexander Hamilton High School Academy of Music
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Bart Marantz

Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts
DALLAS, TEXAS

John Mastroianni

William H. Hall High School
WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

William Sears

Interlochen Arts Academy
INTERLOCHEN, MICHIGAN

Warren Sneed

High School for the Performing and Visual Arts
HOUSTON, TEXAS

Jim Warrick

New Trier Township High School
WINNEKTA, ILLINOIS

Davey Yarborough

Duke Ellington School of the Arts
WASHINGTON, DC