



Marcus Stricklen (New World School) solos on tenor.

Jazz Education in Performing Arts High Schools

Performing arts high schools are secondary schools that specialize in music, dance, drama, and visual arts curricula of a pre-conservatory, pre-professional nature. They are a relatively new and growing phenomenon, combining academics and the arts, with admission by audition. They share with other types of magnet schools four essential ingredients: a distinctive curriculum, a unique district purpose for voluntary desegregation, an opportunity for school choice, and access to students beyond a district attendance zone.

Performing arts high schools in the United States have increased in number from only five in 1970 to over one hundred today. Although classical music has been the primary focus of most of these institutions' music departments, jazz has also become an integral component of many of these schools' curriculums.

What do performing arts high schools that offer jazz programs teach their students? How often do classes meet? Is the emphasis solely on small-group jazz? What methods and approaches have proven effective? Are there similarities in the educational and professional backgrounds of the directors?

*To answer some of these questions, a panel of performing arts high school jazz faculty met at IAJE's Conference in Boston on January 14. Representing the six performing arts high schools that have merited the most **Down Beat** Student Awards at the performing arts high school level, panelists included **Craig Kupka**, Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, Los Angeles; **Bill Sears**, Interlochen Arts Academy, Interlochen, Michigan; **Justin DiCiocco**, LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts, New York City; **Bart Marantz**, Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Dallas; **Robert Morgan**, High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Houston; and myself, **J.B. Dyas**, New World School of the Arts, Miami. Notably, these six schools represent five geographic regions of the country: West Coast, Midwest, Northeast, South, and Southeast. Here I will summarize for you some of the information from that meeting, moderated by Indiana University jazz educator and IAJE Vice-President, **David Baker**.*

by
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