DOWNBEAT 38TH ANNUAL
STUDENT MUSIC AWARDS

YOUNG STARS ON THE RISE
THE BEST STUDENT MUSICIANS OF 2015

Matt Wong, a student at Independence High School in San Francisco, is a High School winner in three categories, including Jazz Instrumental Soloist. (Photo: Scott Chemis)
WELCOME TO THE 38TH ANNUAL DOWNBEAT STUDENT MUSIC AWARDS, A TRADITION THAT SERVES AS ONE OF THE HIGHEST HONORS THAT STUDENT MUSICIANS AND THEIR TEACHERS CAN EARN EACH YEAR.

This year’s SMAs are proof of the transitory nature of music, of jazz and of life. On page 102, we present a tribute to Steve Zegree, the great vocal jazz educator and member of the DownBeat Jazz Education Hall of Fame. Steve passed away on March 7, and like the legions of students he taught, we will never forget his inspiration and dedication to excellence.

We also want to salute another Hall of Famer, Bart Marantz, director of jazz studies at Dallas’ Booker T. Washington HSPVA. Bart is retiring after 32 years of teaching the next generation of jazz, a lineage that includes Roy Hargrove and Norah Jones, both winners of multiple SMAs. The students at Booker T. sent Bart out in style with six more SMAs this year, making it 245 awards in his 32 years. That’s the record for one institution.

But as we say goodbye, we also say hello to the next generation of jazz, one full of hope, chutzpah and promise. This year’s edition of the SMAs, we proudly introduce an entirely new division dedicated to the great music programs at community colleges. This opens up a whole new world of opportunity for young musicians to be recognized.

If you are a parent of a student musician, here’s a special note: We know that not every student who wins an SMA is going to become a big star, but studying music is great preparation for a wide variety of careers. It’s a great place to start. Sure, we’re fond of hearing major artists say, “I knew I could make it in this business after I won my first DownBeat Student Music Award.” But we’re also fond of hearing doctors and lawyers speak fondly of their SMA experience—not to mention all the executives at record companies, music publishers, institutions and instrument manufacturing firms who excelled in their junior high, high school and college jazz band.

So, as you turn the following pages, give a smile and a nod to the next generation. One or two names here might become superstars one day, several others might be the next Bart Marantz or Steve Zegree, and still more might be successful as your dentist, teacher or local business owner.

All of that is due to one simple truth: If you can learn to play jazz well, you can learn to do many things well.

FEATURES

102 Remembering Steve Zegree
108 Jazz Instrumental Soloist
114 Large Jazz Ensemble
120 Large Vocal Jazz Ensemble
126 Latin Group
128 Jazz Arrangement
136 DownBeat Jazz Education Hall of Fame: Rayburn Wright
142 DownBeat Jazz Education Achievement Award: Caleb Chapman
146 DownBeat Jazz Education Achievement Award: Doug Beach
104 DownBeat Student Music Awards—Complete Results
Latin Group Winners Merge Cultural Knowledge, Musical Skills

By Bob Doerschuk

Just as Latin jazz has continued to rise in popularity within the realm of pop culture, it is also becoming increasingly important within academic jazz studies programs. The popularity of the genre has been fueled by numerous factors, including the pool of incredibly talented headlining musicians who perform it, as well as changing demographics in the States. What’s especially gratifying, though, is the interest this has kindled in the hearts of music students of all ages and geographic areas.

At the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Dallas, the next generation of potential marquee stars are playing in the Latin American Ensemble, co-directed by Kent Ellington and Ramon Rodriguez.

“Congo” Rodriguez conveys the history and essence of the music directly to his students. “We’re extremely lucky to have Congo,” said senior Jane Medina, 18, who plays percussion with the ensemble. “He teaches us what we play is more than just a song. We talk a lot about the song before we play it. That’s really important because anybody can say they know salsa music, but our instructor grew up with it.”

“All folk music has these elements: melody, rhythm and dance,” said ULI Geissendoerfer, director of the UNLV Latin Jazz Ensemble at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. “We’ve lost that in jazz, but Latin music still has it. For example, when I was in Cuba in early 1994, I saw how the dancers challenged the musicians and the musicians challenged the dancers in the timba style, with new breaks, different and forgotten rhythms and unexpected changes in clave. I point this out to my students and try to have them feel that when they play.”

Bobby Sanabria, leader of the Manhattan School of Music’s Afro-Cuban Jazz Ensemble, takes this lesson further. “We do steps onstage,” he explained. “I teach them the basics for mambo and cha-cha. I encourage them to take lessons. Because when you dance, you completely change the way you approach the music rhythmically. Buddy Rich, Dinny Gillespie—Charlie Parker—all of these gentlemen were good dancers.”

For students in all three programs, the process of exploring Latin jazz has been transformative. “It helped open my mind to the possibilities of what you’re capable of doing other than to swing,” said UNLV percussionist Austin Pooley, 23. “It’s opened me to world music and how different cultures take different styles and make them their own. Now, whether I’m playing rock or plena or Cuban salsa or bebop or whatever, I try to play it as authentically as I can. I try to think of what those guys would do.”

For saxophonist Patrick Bartley, 22, the Manhattan School’s Afro-Cuban Jazz Ensemble is “the centerpiece of giving you everything you need as a musician. Bobby understands what the audience expects and then he goes beyond their expectations, with respect. That’s the biggest thing I’ve learned. It’s like, ‘Wow, I can actually change it up. All I have to do is pay attention to the audience and the musicians I’m playing with and see how to move forward within that context.’ And that’s deep.”

Geissendoerfer wants his students to understand the music on a technical level and connect with it on an emotional level: “When somebody brings in an arrangement or any piece, we workshop it. We take it apart and I’ll switch things around. I give the different solos. But the rest of it is, ‘Guys, when you come in, feel it. This is what you’re listening for.’ They’re not playing a chart; they’re playing music.”
BTW MIDI Ensemble '15
Booker T. Washington HSPVA
Bart Marantz
Dallas, TX

Performing Arts High School Outstanding Performance

BTW MIDI Ensemble '14
Booker T. Washington HSPVA
Bart Marantz
Dallas, TX

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

Latin Group

Honors Ensemble Winners

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

Soundhouse Soul Project
Caleb Chapman's Soundhouse
Caleb Chapman
Salt Lake City, UT

The Azucartones
Kent Denver School
Steve Holley
Englewood, CO

Performing Arts High School Winner

BTWHSPVA Latin American Ensemble
Booker T. Washington HSPVA
Kent Ellington / Ramon Rodriguez
Dallas, TX

Honors Ensemble Outstanding Performance

Hooligans Brass Band
Caleb Chapman's Soundhouse
Evan Wharton
Salt Lake City, UT

La Onda Caribena
Caleb Chapman's Soundhouse
Caleb Chapman
Salt Lake City, UT

Honors Ensemble Outstanding Performance

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

Undergraduate College Winner

Latin Jazz Ensemble
University of Nevada Las Vegas
Uli Geissendoefer
Las Vegas, NV

Undergraduate College Outstanding Performances

AME – The American Music Ensemble
University of Miami
Frost School of Music
Daniel Strange
Coral Gables, FL

Graduate College Winner

José Valentino & CrossMatch Vamp
University of South Florida
Dr. David Williams

Graduate College Winner

Fullerton Latin Ensemble
California State University Fullerton
Bill Curniffe
Fullerton, CA
Graduate College Winner

**Glynnis Davies Latin Group**
California State University
Long Beach
Christine Helferich Guter
Long Beach, CA

**Eduardo Mercuri Group**
Berklee College of Music
Oscar Stagnaro
Boston, MA

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

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

Original Composition – Small Ensemble

**Junior High School Winner**

Esteban Castro, “Amazonia”
Manhattan School of Music Precollege Division
Phillip Kawin
New York, NY

**High School Winner**

Matt Wong, “It Crossed My Mind”
Independence High School
Dann Zinn
San Francisco, CA

**High School Outstanding Compositions**

Calvin Lu, “Marche Capriccio”
Colts Neck High School
Dr. John Girvin
Colts Neck, NJ

Leo Folsom, “Time Warp”
Roosevelt High School
Michael Stegner
Seattle, WA

Performing Arts High School Winner

Luca Mendoza, “Ophelia”
Colburn Community School of Performing Arts
Lee Secard
Los Angeles, CA

Performing Arts High School Outstanding Composition

Corey Gordon,
“Leaving the Cave”
Colburn Community School of Performing Arts
Lee Secard

Our students choose from majors in music, music education or jazz studies and also pursue countless other passions.

**Freshman Visit Days:**
Monday, June 29
Friday, July 10
Monday, July 27

To schedule an individual campus visit call 630-637-5800 or visit northcentralcollege.edu/admission/campus-visits

Jazz Faculty
Janice Borla - Voice
Mitch Palena - Saxophone
Art Davis - Trumpet
Bryan Scott - Trombone
Brad Stitz - Vibraphone
John McLean - Guitar
Chris White - Piano
Jim Cox - Bass
Jack Mouse - Drum set, Program Coordinator

Fine arts scholarships are available for new, incoming students interested in participating in music and theatre. For audition dates visit northcentralcollege.edu/audition.
“Rave” CD reviews from Jazz Times Magazine
Winners of 8 DownBeat Magazine Student Music Awards since 2010

UNLV Jazz Ensemble I, The UNLV Latin Jazz Ensemble and Honors Jazz Quartet

2015 Monterey Next Generation Jazz Festival College Big Band & Open Combo Division Finalists!

THE UNLV DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
CONGRATULATES
The UNLV Latin Jazz Ensemble Latin Group Undergraduate College Winner
DownBeat Magazine 2015 SMA Awards

UNLV Jazz Studies Area
Bachelor of Music in Jazz Studies
Performance or Composition
Master of Music with a Concentration in Jazz Performance or Composition

Faculty:
DAVE LOEB—Director of Jazz Studies, jazz bands, jazz piano

TOM WARRINGTON—jazz bass, jazz theory

NATHAN TANOUYE—jazz trombone, jazz bands, jazz composition

JARRET MYERS—jazz guitar

BERNIE DRESEL—Drums

WAYNE DE SILVA—jazz saxophone

GIL KAUPP—jazz trumpet, recording techniques

JO BELLE YONELY—jazz vocal

ULI GEISSENDÖRFER—Latin Jazz Ensemble, jazz combos

NATE KIMBALL—jazz composition, jazz trombone

Recent Guest Artists In Residence:
Joe LaBarbera, George Garzone, Wayne Bergeron, Chris Potter, Tim Hagans, Bob Sheppard, Peter Erskine, Clay Jenkins, Eric Marienthal, Marlena Shaw, Rich Perry, George Stone, Bill Cunliffe, Brandon Fields, and Carl Saunders

Scholarships and graduate assistantships are available

For audition and scholarship information contact:
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