

Notes From an All-Star



Ben Flocks

I was floating, soaring, and flying. We improvised melodies, tossed rhythms back and forth, and spontaneously played in canon with beautiful harmonies I'd never imagined before. I could express my true emotions and feelings on the spot, and in the moment.

Last night, I sat in at a club in New York City with my favorite saxophonist, Joshua Redman, and I remembered why playing and listening to live music is such an important part of my life.

Some of my first live performances were with the SFJAZZ High School All-Stars. I was fortunate to get the chance to play at a young age with other people who were as intrigued by and passionate about jazz as me. SFJAZZ brought in master musicians to work with us. I'll never forget playing Herbie Hancock's "Tell Me A Bedtime Story" with drummer Tootie Heath, or hearing spiritual jazz anecdotes from Yusef Lateef. There were other teachers and groups that helped me too. I studied and performed with legendary Santa Cruz trumpeter and arranger Ray Brown, played with the Kuumbwa Jazz Honor Band and attended weekly concerts at the Kuumbwa Jazz Center.

While playing with these ensembles took up a lot of my free time, I was always a motivated student, and interested in studying more than music. So I was at a crossroads when it came time to choose a

college. Should I opt for a traditional college, where I could study lots of subjects, or a music conservatory?

Lucky for me, I found a perfect balance by studying for two years at the University of the Pacific's Brubeck Institute. It was a complete jazz immersion. I studied the great performers and composers and played every day with four other musicians in a band called the Brubeck Fellows. When we weren't in class, we were traveling and performing — in venues ranging from Oakland's Yoshis and the Detroit Jazz Festival, to the Kennedy Center and the Library of Congress. We were constantly mentored by our musical heroes, like Dave Brubeck, Yosvany Terry, and Joe Gilman, and always inspired to hone our group sound and compositions.

Today I'm finishing my studies at the New School in New York City and performing around town with SFJAZZ Alumni. I made lots of friendships playing with the All-Stars. Many are my closest musical partners and friends, and I owe a lot to SFJAZZ for fostering these relationships on and off the bandstand.

I encourage everyone to follow your passion and do what you love. Most of all, listen to live music, and PLAY live music! Fill your life with as many new experiences as possible and you'll learn something new every day. And after playing some beautiful music with beautiful people last night, I can't wait for what I'll learn next.

Ben Flocks is a saxophonist, composer and educator from Santa Cruz, CA. Selected in 2007 as a Brubeck Institute Fellow, he studied with Joe Gilman among others. He has performed in the world's top festivals and venues including The Kennedy Center, the 2010 Monterey Jazz Festival (with his own group), The San Francisco and San Jose Jazz Festivals and the Umbria Jazz Festival in Italy. Currently, Ben is finishing his undergraduate studies at The New School, and is a mentor at the Stanford Jazz Workshop.

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SFJAZZ education BE THE MUSIC

THANK YOU

Education programs are made possible in part through the generous annual membership gifts of SFJAZZ Members and Leaders Circle. We are also grateful to the following foundations, corporations and individuals who have made direct gifts and grants in support of jazz education: Chris Barker • Mr. Lewis E. Byrd • Del Anderson Handy and John Handy • James Family Foundation

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SFJAZZ **SFJAZZ Education Newsletter**
2011 SPRING EDITION • SFJAZZ.ORG/EDUCATION BE THE MUSIC

New Director of Education Dreams Big For the Future

BY REBECA MAULEÓN



Rebeca Mauleón

It's a thrill to join SFJAZZ in its mission to spread the joy of jazz, and to ensure it will continue in the capable hands and hearts of the next generation. I believe my personal journey as a musician, educator and author will help serve as a powerful springboard, providing inspiration and ideas on the role music can play in our daily lives.

My family included poets, dancers and musicians. I grew up listening to every kind of music, started piano lessons at 3, composed my first tune on the ukulele at 6, and played my first nightclub at 15. It was a shock when I learned that in most urban environments, many students entering college have had no musical training whatsoever — not even the chance to bang on a drum.

So I asked myself: what can I do to help change this?

Well, plenty. I like to dream big, to think about music education in the way it could — and should — exist in our communities. Can you imagine a world where jazz is encouraged and valued in the same way as technology? Or an education system where music and art are funded on par with sports or science programs? I can. And, as SFJAZZ looks to expand its educational outreach, I'll make it my personal priority to see that people of all ages, cultural and economic backgrounds have the same opportunity to have music in their lives as I did.

I want to see those next musical pioneers come from our own

neighborhoods and schools — whether public, private or parochial — and emerge as the next Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Tito Puente or Josef Zawinul. Artists and educators alike need institutional support, advocacy and encouragement, as well as the support of the public, the media and our government. The amazing programs already in place at SFJAZZ are just part of the equation, and we hope to do more by joining forces with other Bay Area organizations and beyond to continue these conversations, and to find strategies that will expand the breadth of music education into the future.

It's an exciting time for SFJAZZ as we look ahead to our new SFJAZZ Center. What a joy it will be to have another space to come together, to celebrate, to make and learn about music, and to see the future of music in the hands of its next ambassadors.

SFJAZZ Director of Education Rebeca Mauleón is an internationally acclaimed pianist, composer, arranger, author, educator and producer. Lauded "one of the hippest band leaders in Latin music" as well as crowned "First Lady of Latin Jazz," Mauleón fronts her own powerhouse Afro-Cuban Jazz ensemble and is the author of several authoritative texts on Afro-Caribbean music history and performance, including the critically heralded *Salsa Guidebook*. Her composing credits include music for television, film, software and symphony orchestra as well as recordings with Tito Puente, Carlos Santana, Joe Henderson, Steve Winwood, Israel "Cachao" López and others. Mauleón is a Grammy-nominated producer, a tenured professor of music history, performance and composition, and is also a contributing writer to *National Geographic* and *JazzTimes* Magazine as well as other national music publications.

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UPCOMING HIGH SCHOOL ALL-STARS ENGAGEMENTS

THURSDAY, MAY 5, 7:30PM

All-Stars Jazz Orchestra Spring Concert
Guest Soloist Robin Eubanks
Jewish Community Center of San Francisco

TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 6PM

All-Stars Jazz Orchestra performance
Plaza, Healdsburg Jazz Festival

AUGUST 26–AUGUST 28

All-Stars Auditions
Sign up: sfjazz.org/audition

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 8PM

All-Stars Combo performance
The Jazz School, Berkeley

UPCOMING SFJAZZ EDUCATION EVENTS

DISCOVER JAZZ SERIES

Jewish Community Center of San Francisco
Stay tuned for fall theme and dates

AUGUST 3–SEPTEMBER 21 WEDNESDAYS, 7–9PM

"El Son Afro-Cubano" with John Santos
Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco
(co-presented with Yerba Buena Gardens Festival)

FAMILY MATINEES

MAY 21, 11AM

Herbst Theatre
with Marcus Shelby
The Blues — Hearing & Feeling It

PRE-CONCERT TALKS

with the Artist 1-Hour before
showtime at the following events:

MAY 20: Lionel Loueke Trio, YBCA Forum
JUNE 18: Nikki Yanofsky, Herbst Theatre

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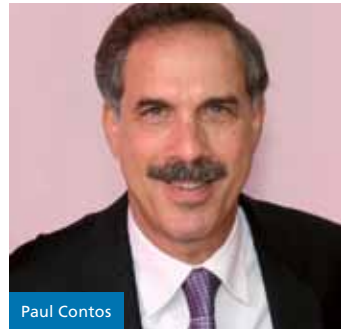
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Band Director Sound Bite



More Progressive Improvisation Drills for the Whole Band

I hope you all found something useful in the beginning improvisation drills I outlined in the Fall 2010 newsletter. This article continues that theme and offers up two more ideas I've had a lot of success with in bands in the U.S. as well as in workshops and jazz camps in Japan and Brazil.

This next set of drills challenges the band's ability to fashion their skill in playing scale-oriented lines into "real" music, and progressively shape what they're doing into ever-increasing jazz playing that emulates the jazz language.

The first set is important (refer back to the Fall 2010 Ed. newsletter if necessary) because it's critical students come away with not only the skill and jazz awareness to play their individual parts proficiently, but also an individual and personal adeptness in the scales, chords and chord arpeggios used in jazz. Such adeptness raises the band's maturity level and the group's sound.

For students who want to be more creative thinkers, it's time to incorporate other tones that express the feeling of the Blues.

By the end of the last newsletter, I'd suggested the rhythm section play a repeated looped sequence of two minor seventh chords — for example: 4 bars of C min.7th, then 4 bars of Eb min.7th. The band

goes right down the line trading 4's. Everyone gets to make their "statement" in 4 bars, on either of the two chords. It's imperative they stay focused listening (and counting) so they know which of the two chords they'll be improvising on when their turn comes up (either C min.7 or Eb min. 7), as this will obviously make a big difference!

This takes practice, but students who are shy and can't get over playing without sheet music can gradually make a simple melodic statement using a Dorian mode, as every note in the scale sounds good on top of the chord change being played. Inventing and thinking rhythmically is the most important thing, as a million notes in 4 bars isn't as musical as a nice cohesive fragment that has a solid or intriguing rhythmic quality to it!

Students should practice becoming proficient at playing the Dorian modes in all 12 keys, as they're merely the 12 major scales, based on the 2nd step, right — and students should know all 12 major scales for contemporary music, for sure! Now: have the rhythm section play 4 bars of each minor 7th chord and move up (or down) chromatically. Ex: C min. 7th; C# min. 7th; D min. 7th; Eb min. 7th; until reaching C min. 7th again, then repeating the cycle.

This drill gives students practice in spontaneous decision-making and thinking quickly, because they have to access information they need to use their hands, mouths, and feet. This means students get to practice the qualities and skills that make learning music so helpful in developing key life skills.

Options: This chromatic sequence of minor 7th chords (either ascending or descending) can be altered by going through the circle of fourths, if you prefer; Ex: C min.7th; F min. 7th; Bb min. 7th, etc. Be flexible and tailor these ideas to suit your group.

If going through all 12 keys is too challenging for piano, guitar and/or bass players, you'll find just going through 4 or 5 keys helps everyone, too. The rhythm section should change up the style as these changes are played. For example, consider alternating between Latin and

swing, so students get more practice playing various grooves. Pianists can develop easy montuno figures at first, for playing on minor 7th chord changes in Latin style, then graduate to more sophisticated rhythmic figures (in synchronicity with bass, drums and percussion). (Please refer to Rebeca Mauleón's superb books and materials such as: *101 Montunos*, *The Salsa Guidebook*, *The Latin Pianist*, and others for examples and resources for student rhythm section players and bands.) One more thing; Horn players need to transpose the chord changes being played to their keys on each instrument: Bb horns (trumpet, tenor and soprano sax, clarinet) and Eb horns (alto and baritone saxes).

Here's a wonderful phrase using the Dorian mode. It's "organic" in the sense I learned it by ear from listening to the greats in places like Keystone Korner. I'd come home and, through practicing, remember some of the phrases these jazz greats were using in their improvised solos. This one is fundamental:

Ex: Dorian Melodic Phrase



Of course, you have to challenge students to learn this in all keys:

Ex: Dorian Melodic Phrase-Chromatic



To have the whole ensemble learn such a phrase will go a long way in sculpting a basic jazz scale idea

into something that's more musical, and has a melodic flow to it. It can be a springboard to a lot of other minor mode phrases, as well as a beginning phrase for maneuvering through the II-V-I progression (to come in a later newsletter).

Get Away from the "Blues Scale"!

I think it's time students get away from the so-called "Blues Scale": root, flat 3rd, 4th, flat 5th, 5th, flat 7th, 8th. I know many schools use it as a warm-up and that's OK. But for students who want to be more creative thinkers, it's time to incorporate other tones that express the feeling of the Blues.

Some variations:

Root, flat 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th.
Or: root, 2nd, flat 3rd, 5th, 6th, 8th (one of my favorites).

These "scales" have various names and the latter one is identical to an East Asian scale. And, yes, the third and the sixth are historically considered "imperfect" intervals, but they're important for jazz expression. I can't conceive of playing a solo on the Blues without using the interval of a sixth! I could never figure out why that was left out of the lexicon of what is currently known as the "Blues scale." Have students try these different modalities and sounds on a dominant seventh chord, or when your rhythm section is playing a simple 12-bar blues progression.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 »

Diversity in Jazz Education: The Issues at Hand, Part II BY JOHN CALLOWAY



This article is continued from our Fall 2010 Newsletter.

I believe the best way to lessen the disparity in performing arts ensembles in general, and, in jazz ensembles specifically, requires a sustained, coordinated and multi-prong approach at all levels of education, by as many stakeholders as possible.

To start, expose children to jazz early, regardless of socioeconomic status, because most children don't grow up listening to jazz in their home. Like a foreign language, jazz is a lot easier to comprehend if you're immersed in it at an early age. Currently, the SF Symphony's Adventures in Music Program provides San Francisco elementary school children with great listening and interactive experiences for jazz and other types of world music.

Look to create student interest in performing jazz even before

they begin playing instruments by having music teachers sing and use classroom instruments to teach phrasing and rhythms associated with jazz. Once students begin to play instruments in the 4th and 5th grade, they can learn simple jazz songs, such as "C Jam Blues," along with simple 3-4 note scales and begin the improvisation process.

The crux for jazz education and development, however, really begins in middle school. Sequential programs are key, along with experienced teachers who're dedicated and committed to reaching our most underserved students. In urban middle schools with minimal or no music classes, more programs like SFJAZZ's "Jazz in the Middle" and the "Jazz and Democracy Project" are needed to maintain interest in jazz and further develop student knowledge. Schools with band programs that service a high number of students of low socioeconomic status clearly need more resources and support from outside sources.

In San Francisco, the Symphony, Blue Bear School of Music and the Community Music Center have all contributed by working directly with middle schools, or by offering students scholarships to classes and lessons. Further, more school districts are now realizing that like

with other subjects, students of lower socioeconomic status need more support to develop skills to access higher level classes for music and all arts. The San Francisco Unified School District Visual and Performing Arts Department is now planning to offer more classes and lessons to begin to close the achievement gap for underserved students.

Concerned jazz educators and organizations should also have liaisons who can work with middle school music teachers to direct students with potential and interest in jazz to more resources and training.

In conclusion, there's no one solution to lessen the disparity in jazz education between students of various socioeconomic backgrounds, but by talking about and acknowledging such disparity, we can envision a movement towards closing it. Perhaps a large, coordinated multi-organizational effort is needed to overcome this lack of diversity and inclusion. One thing is sure, and that is, simply having a non-discrimination policy and offering a few classes isn't enough to attract underserved students who sometimes opt out of what we perceive as opportunities.

For readers who believe these types of efforts are enough to close the

gap and are representative of social responsibility, we can expect to see the same results and scenarios time and time again. Fixing the lack of diversity by increasing inclusion takes an understanding of the underlying socioeconomic issues of those we wish to reach so that we can better offer our services to them. We must not only be jazz educators pushing jazz education, but also activists who see the absence of these certain ethnic, racial and underserved groups in jazz as an equity and social justice issue for the arts.

Dr. John Calloway serves on the Arts Commission for the City of San Francisco, is a lecturer in Music and Ethnic Studies at SFSU, a long-time music teacher in the San Francisco public schools, and an advocate for social justice through the arts.

SUMMER WORKSHOPS

This summer, SFJAZZ Education is hosting three free workshops in the Bay Area for high-school jazz students. Each workshop will focus on key jazz skills, including improvisation, sight reading, rhythm, jazz theory and much more. In addition, our final summer workshop focuses on the audition process, teaching students how to prepare, practice and present music during auditions.

Led by international jazz educator and SFJAZZ High School All-Stars director Paul Contos as well as professional local jazz musicians and teachers, students will advance their jazz skills and have fun in the process.

JAZZ IN THE MIDDLE

The SFJAZZ Jazz in the Middle program provides curriculum-based residencies, linking jazz and academic subjects in the 6th, 7th and 8th grade classroom. Drawing on the fundamental elements of jazz, students are immersed in the concepts of collaboration, improvisation, and transformation in a real-life simulation mirroring the creation of live jazz on the bandstand.

Check the website for exact dates and details: sfjazz.org/education
For more information, please email cphillips@sfjazz.org

BAND DIRECTOR SOUND BITE

Remind them to be flexible and mix tones from the various scales to make sensible musical statements. Here's a simple 3-voice exercise you can do with your band using some of these intervals. There's just enough tension in the I-chord (C7) to give it a funkier-gospel feel and it should be played in a swing or shuffle style.

Have individual students improvise over the top, using some of the additional notes mentioned above, getting away from the tired, old, jazz

ensemble "Blues scale." Voice notes out in the horn section as you see fit, teaching the students by ear only:

I-IV Blues Vamp



I hope you and your students enjoy these drills, and they aid everyone's learning process. Next time I'll be offering suggestions for a question

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