

OAKTOWN JAZZ WORKSHOPS



ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2020



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

OAKTOWNJAZZ.ORG

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Dear Friend of Oaktown Jazz Workshops,
2020 began with our typical jam-packed schedule of workshops and vibrant community concerts. Then COVID-19 hit. Oaktown Jazz Workshops adapted to the new normal by creating new ways for our students to 1) continue developing as artists, 2) explore the history of jazz innovation, and 3) stay connected to their musical community.

As Oaktown Jazz Workshops' young musicians sheltered in place, we loaned them high-quality instruments to play at home and launched private one-on-one lessons, engaging our extended family of talented alumni as online instructors. Our Jazz Encounters also moved online: we hosted sessions with Richard Howell, Joshua Redman, and John Santos, and connected our kids with The New School's Zoom class with saxophone legend Sonny Rollins.

We launched weekly *Hear & Now* listening assignments, focusing on the contributions of jazz innovators. Our Core Faculty and Youth Mentors hosted online video discussions after each assignment, during which students shared their feedback, and our instructors conveyed their first-hand knowledge of how jazz has developed over time.

We can't wait to return to in-person learning, jamming, and performing together in the nurturing space we have created in Jack London Square. We are grateful to the supporters, collaborators, and families who have helped us through this challenging pandemic year.

RAVI ABCARIAN

Executive Director



MISSION & VISION

OUR MISSION is to promote, preserve, and perform jazz music so that all youth – particularly under-served youth – develop a sense of ownership and pride in jazz as a uniquely American cultural tradition.

OUR VISION is a safe space for artistic expression, where thousands of young musicians from varied backgrounds connect through music, discover their own distinct voices, and develop the skills to become supportive and engaged members of their communities – skills like self-discipline, the ability to collaborate, and the courage to perform before a live audience.

OUR PROGRAMS for Oakland youth, ages 10–18, include the following:

- **Combo Workshops:** Youth learn to improvise solos on their instruments while playing different types of jazz and blues tunes in a band setting.
- **Performance Ensemble Workshops:** Youth continue to improve their musicianship in a band setting and perform concerts throughout Alameda County.
- **Jazz Improvisation and Music Theory Classes:** 10-week sessions, in spring and fall.
- **Jazz Encounters:** Clinics with high-profile guest musicians on tour. During the pandemic, OJW continued to offer Jazz Encounters online.
- **Jazz in the Schools:** OJW faculty lead clinics, presentations, sectionals, and concerts throughout school year in Oakland and Berkeley middle schools.
- **One-on-one Private Lessons:** Online music lessons for OJW students during COVID-19, taught by a great lineup of professional musicians, including alumni in NYC, LA, and Berlin.
- **Hear & Now:** Weekly jazz listening assignments, followed by live Zoom discussions on historical jazz innovations, facilitated by OJW faculty and Youth Mentors.



OJW students perform at our
Young Musicians Showcase
Photo © David De Hart 2020

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Right before COVID-19 hit the pause button on community concerts, Oaktown Jazz Workshops hosted our spring Young Musicians Showcase on March 1, 2020. At right, Richard Howell leads OJW's Performance Combo.



At left, our young musicians perform at the Museum of African Diaspora's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Free Family Day.

At right, Oaktown Jazz Workshops young musicians play at the City of Piedmont's Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration.



At left, Oaktown Jazz Workshops' Performance Ensemble performs at the Museum of African Diaspora's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Free Family Day.

PERFORMANCES

- 1/20/2020 MLK Day Celebration, Veteran's Hall, Piedmont
- 1/20/2020 MLK Day Celebration, Museum of African Diaspora, San Francisco
- 1/25/2020 Oakland A's Fanfest, Jack London Square, Oakland
- 2/23/2020 "Tunes in the Terminal" at the Oakland Airport
- 2/29/2020 Visit Oakland's Dinner w/ Celebrity Chef Tu David Phu
- 3/1/2020 Young Musician Showcase, Oaktown Jazz Workshops Stage



CONCERTS ONLINE

12/10/20 We live-streamed MeloDious in concert from the Oaktown Jazz Workshops stage in Jack London Square, bringing the electric, pure, and soulful sounds of siblings Micaiah, Matthias, and Memphis to our Facebook and Instagram feed. Photo courtesy of artist.

"HEAR & NOW" ZOOM DISCUSSIONS

During the pandemic, Oaktown Jazz Workshops sent weekly listening assignments to all our students. Then we met for lively Zoom discussions, facilitated by our faculty and Youth Mentors.



JAZZ ENCOUNTERS

In 2020, the young musicians of Oaktown Jazz Workshops met and participated in clinics with Violinist Mads Tolling and Bassist Cecil McBee. Once the pandemic made in-person gatherings unsafe, we shifted to offering Jazz Encounters online. Our students logged in to engage with Saxophonist Sonny Rollins, as well as Percussionist John Santos, Saxophonist Richard Howell, and Saxophonist Joshua Redman, below.



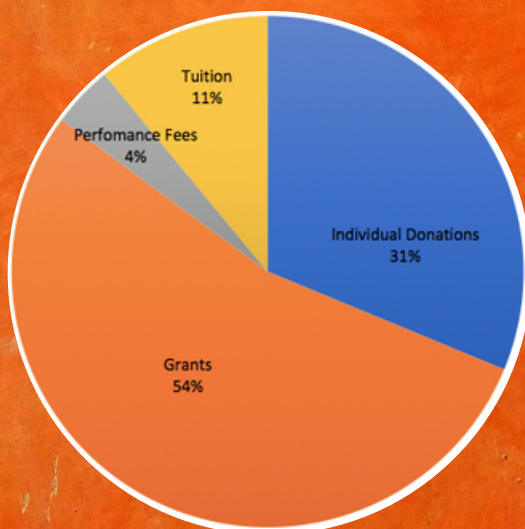
Photo bottom left by Maria Elena Quale, photo bottom right by Ravi Abcarian

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

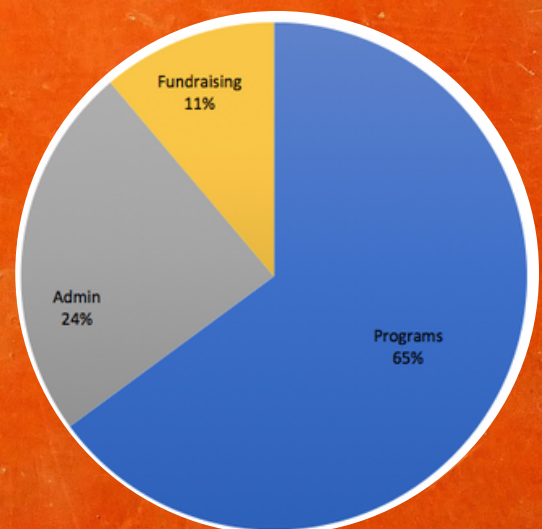
Oaktown Jazz Workshops' programming is supported by income from earned income (student tuition, performance fees, and benefit concerts), individual donations, and grants from foundations and government entities. In a typical year, we receive one third of our income from grants, one third through individual donations, and one third through earned income. 2020 was not a typical year.

As schools and performance venues shut down to stop the spread of COVID-19, our earned income plummeted. To compensate for the loss of tuition and performance fees, Oaktown Jazz Workshops applied to an array of COVID relief grant programs, as well as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which administered forgivable loans. Along with help from our committed supporters, we received enough funding to cover our operating costs through this challenging pandemic year - and enough to support private online lessons for our students who qualify for needs-based scholarships.

INCOME



EXPENSES



THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who has helped Oaktown Jazz Workshops achieve our 2020 goals. We are grateful for our donors, grantors, board of directors, volunteers, talented instructors, and all the professional musicians who generously spent time with our young musicians. 65% of our students qualify for scholarships, and our fundraising bridges that gap.

Grantors

Alameda County Arts Commission
Bill Graham Memorial Foundation
City of Oakland Cultural Funding
East Bay Community Energy
Find Your Light Foundation
James Irvine Foundation
Port of Oakland Community Investment
The Clorox Company Foundation
Walter & Elise Haas Foundation
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David De Hart: Teacher, Albany High School

