

OAKTOWN JAZZ WORKSHOPS



ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2021



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

OAKTOWNJAZZ.ORG

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Dear Friend of Oaktown Jazz Workshops,
2021 was a transitional year for Oaktown Jazz Workshops: we started with six months of pandemic programming, then resumed our in-person classes and workshops in the summer. Soon we were hosting concerts at our venue and our youth performing at community events. It was rewarding to see returning OJW students rekindle their friendships with each other through music and exciting for us to welcome new musicians to our program!

Our workshops and classes bring kids together from many different neighborhoods. Here they learn in a safe and supportive environment, complete with high-quality musical instruments and equipment. Most students stay in our program for over two years, giving our faculty the opportunity to know their strengths and achievements well, and to provide personalized guidance as they progress.

Our instructors work collaboratively, sharing their many decades of experience as professional musicians with students. Our Youth Mentors now co-teach workshops and serve as role models. When they return to the Bay Area, many alumni make a point to visit Oaktown Jazz Workshops and help to connect current students with future academic and professional possibilities.

We offer a program that young musicians consistently find inspiring and authentic. Thank you for supporting local young people seeking opportunities for creative expression and artistic development.

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.
- **One-on-one Private Lessons:** Individualized music lessons for OJW students, taught by a great lineup of professional musicians, including alumni in NYC, LA, and Berlin. (Conducted remotely during first six months of 2021, and in-person the last half of the year.)
- **Hear & Now:** Weekly jazz listening assignments, followed by live Zoom discussions on historical jazz innovations, facilitated by OJW faculty and Youth Mentors. (Offered the first six months of 2021, when in-person programming was not allowed due to health guidelines.)



OJW students perform at
Community Comeback Picnic at Lake
Temescal
Photo © David De Hart 2021

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

At right, Oaktown Jazz Workshops hosts our first Young Musicians Showcase of 2021 in the parking lot of Higher Ground Church.



At left, our young musicians let loose before their first public performance of 2021: the Back-to-School Garden Party at Oakland's Hoover Elementary School.



At right, Oaktown Jazz Workshops students, faculty, and Youth Mentors perform at the Community Comeback Picnic at Lake Temescal.



At left, students' first day back at our Jack London Square practice space after a year of remote pandemic programming - thrilled to play music again together!



PERFORMANCES

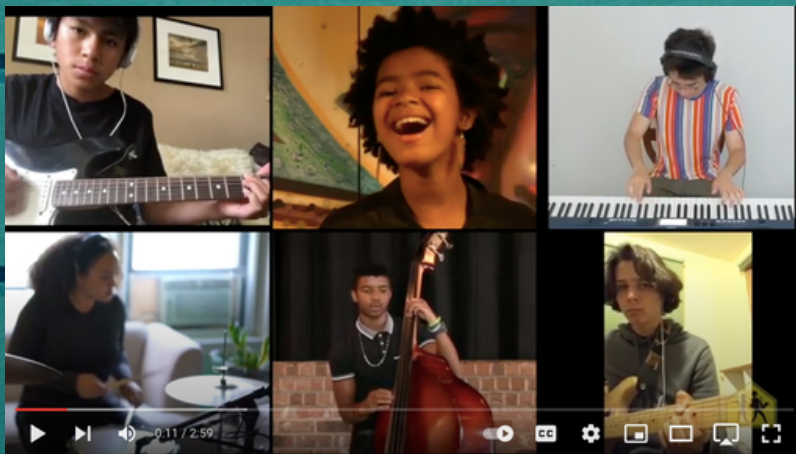
8/7/2021 Black Liberation Walking Tour, Back to School Garden Party, Hoover Elementary

10/17/2021 Community Comeback Picnic at Lake Temescal, Oakland

10/19/2021 Michael Morgan Memorial Concert at the Paramount Theater

10/30/2021 Oakland Roots Town Biz Night at Laney College Football Field

11/14/2021 OJW Young Musicians Showcase at Higher Ground Church



Thanks to EBCE.org for funding this project!

MUSIC VIDEO

OJW students made a music video of "Hi-Heel Sneakers." The students were given detailed instructions on how to record themselves overdubbing to the drum track, using their phones. In two months, we collected the videos, edited them, and mixed them into a single video. Watch it on our YouTube channel!

"HEAR & NOW" ZOOM DISCUSSIONS

With health restrictions in place for early 2021, we continued to engage our students with weekly listening assignments followed by lively Zoom discussions. This gave us an opportunity to share the history and music of the many innovators who evolved jazz music along the way.



ONE-ON-ONE LESSONS



Oaktown Jazz Workshops has offered private instruction for many years, but during the early days of the pandemic, we realized that one-on-one online instruction would be the primary way that we could support our students' musical development until we could resume workshops in person again. Our expanded lineup of instructors included our lead faculty instructors, guest instructors, and OJW alumni Jordon Dabney (saxophone), Savannah Harris (drums), Ashanti Johnson (voice), Jesse Levit (saxophone), and Anthony Mills-Branch (bass). In our cascading leadership model, Youth Mentors play an important role as instructors and "near peers" who the younger kids look up to.

JAZZ ENCOUNTERS



In 2021, the young musicians of Oaktown Jazz Workshops met and participated in clinics with Kazemde George and Erika Oba, who led rehearsals for the Performance Ensemble.

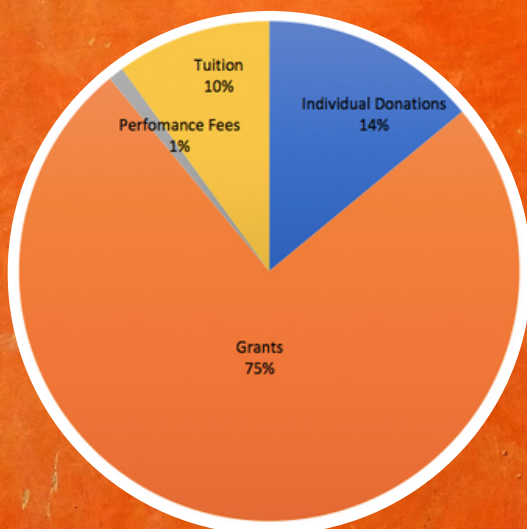
Photos by © David De Hart 2021,
photo of Savannah Harris by Grayson Littles

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

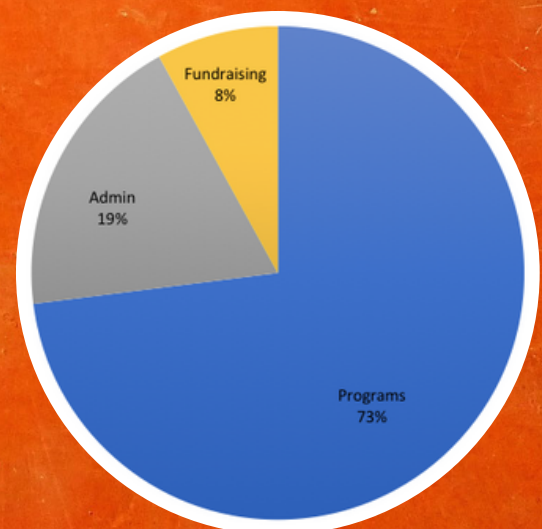
Oaktown Jazz Workshops' programming is supported by income from earned income (student tuition, performance fees, and benefit concerts), individual donations, and grants from foundations and government entities. In a typical year, we receive one third of our income from grants, one third through donations, and one third through earned income. As the pandemic continued through 2021, our financial picture remained atypical.

For the first half of 2021, we offered online programming. For the second half of 2021, we resumed in-person programming and returned to performing, albeit exclusively at outdoor venues. To compensate for the pandemic-related loss of tuition and performance fees, we aggressively pursued COVID relief grants that enabled us to continue supporting our students with online lessons. We had no expenses related to hosting concerts (eg. audio engineering and house management) during "shelter in place," which brought our overall program expenses down. Grants and donations helped us transition back to our Jack London Square practice and concert space, where we invested in health measures such as hand sanitizer stations, special masks for musicians, and increased ventilation.

INCOME



EXPENSES



THANK YOU

Major Donors

Dr. Gary Bean
Desley Brooks
Amer Budayr
Nick Cawthon
Molly Coye
Vicki Cucarola
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Gregory Stern
Jeff Weinmann
Sonja Bjork & Tamara Schlosser
Edward Cohen & Kaht Dorward
Juanita Rosette & Scott Robinson
Evelyn & Jimmie Wesley

65% of our students qualify for scholarships. Our donors and grantors lift our students up, giving them the opportunities they deserve to develop as artists and engaged community members.

Grantors

Alameda County Arts Commission
Bill Graham Memorial Foundation
California Arts Council
City of Oakland Cultural Funding
Clarence E. Heller Foundation
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Diablo Regional Arts Association
East Bay Community Energy
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Juanita Rosette: Writer/Editor
Gary Bean, MD: Pediatrician, Glenview Pediatrics
David De Hart: Teacher, Albany High School
Rest in Peace Michael Morgan: (1957 - 2021) Music Director, Oakland Symphony. As an OJW Board Member, Michael Morgan's guidance was invaluable as he had an amazing ability to find solutions to issues far away on the horizon and keep the focus on offering high quality music education to young people.