

EARSHOT JAZZ

A Mirror and Focus for the Jazz Community

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Ahamefule J. Oluo

Photo by Naomi Ishisaka



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MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure the legacy and progression of the art form, Earshot Jazz cultivates a vibrant jazz community by engaging audiences, celebrating artists, and supporting arts education.



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Earstream Trailer

In the world of film and video, which, in the absence live concerts, has become the primary medium for jazz performance, the word “trailer” is essentially what they used to call “pre-view of coming attractions.” Next month, Earshot will stream its 2020 jazz festival. Hence, this issue, as the Earstream Trailer (riffing, of course, on the classic yet futuristic (like jazz) Airstream (if I need to mansplain) trailer). I can’t wait to see where it takes us!

As always, we’re working to create a series that reflects the history, progression, and spirit of jazz as it exists around the world and, especially, here in our home community. This year, we’re also going to be banking new skills as video producers, aspiring, with the best possible production values, to create an environment that successfully conveys the deep soul, beautiful structures, and spontaneous invention of “live” jazz performance. Again, I can’t wait to see where *that* takes us. Read further into this issue for details.

We’re putting on a jazz festival! In these unsettling times, our daily engagement with uncertainty and adaptability is bound to help us all build our chops at improvising for the long run. The old adage says, “with crisis comes opportunity.” With this year’s festival, we’re taking the opportunity to go deeper into our incredible home community, and to expand the context of art, feeling, equity, loss, history, love, sound, money, creativity, race, education, video, anger, face masks, work, peace, spirit, progression, and our responsibility to humanity, as they all relate to the cultural treasure of jazz and this amazing city of Seattle.

We’re grateful and eager to be working on a deeper level this year with Seattle’s hippest renaissance man, Ahamefule J. Oluo, as the festival’s Featured Resident Artist. Aham has cooked up some exceptional ideas, and we’re eager to dig in. Check out Paul Rauch’s cover story and interview with Aham in this issue on page 6.

Finally, to state a core belief: live jazz, with real people, in the same room, is one of the best things in the world. We feel that one more deeply each month. We’ll deal with video because we’re committed to connect the music with the audience. We are in service to jazz. We’ll do all that we can, and then some, but we can’t wait to get back into live performances.

So, when this virtually futuristic Earstream pulls up at your device, get on board. There will be no such thing as Sold Out—Filled to Capacity. The sky is the limit. Come ON!

—John Gilbreath, Executive Director





King County Awards COVID-19 Relief Grants to Science, Art & Culture, and Live Music Venues

With \$2 million of funding backed by the federal CARES Act, King County awarded a total of 62 grants in three categories: Music venues (35 awards), Arts, culture and science education organizations (21 awards), Science organizations (6 awards). The grant funds will improve compliance with public health safety measures as these organizations reopen to support the county's economic recovery and enhance residents' quality of life.

Grants may be used to reimburse a variety of costs between March 1 and December, such as payroll, rent, mortgage payments (excluding property taxes), healthcare insurance for employees, and utility expenses necessary to sustain the business during and after the public health emergency.

The Washington Music Nightlife Association (WANMA) continues to advocate for music venues. Visit wanma.info to get involved with their Save our Stages initiative.

Programming Changes at KEXP Reflect Anti-Racist Commitment

Recently, the Seattle-based public radio station and arts organization KEXP 91.3 announced changes to their programming in a bid to bring a wider range of voices and expertise to its radio programming. Changes include a new weekday radio lineup, the addition of two new full-time leadership positions in music curation and editorial content, and the expansion of several production roles. These developments form part of KEXP's commitment to becoming an anti-racist organization and making the station's programming stronger overall. Changes include new job roles for these KEXP DJs—Larry Mizell, Jr.

will become Director of Editorial and Gabriel Teodros will become Associate Music Director; introducing a new show titled Overnight Afrobeats hosted by Lace Cadence; expanding roles for established contributors—Sharlese Metcalf will host a new show titled Mechanical Breakdown, and Albina Cabrera will become a permanent co-host of the show El Sonido, as well as the Latin American Content Producer. John Richards, Director of Programming, emphasized that "KEXP's mission must be to serve our whole community. These programming changes reflect a big step in that direction, and one I hope will lead to even more Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) voices being centered on and off the air—not only at KEXP but also in other non-profits and media organizations in our city and beyond." Programming changes went into effect on July 27. Visit kexp.org for information.

4Culture's Reopening Toolkit

4Culture has a helpful reopening toolkit for arts and culture organizations. Resources are provided to assist organizations in preparing staff, volunteers, and their facility to welcome back patrons. The toolkit includes communication guidelines, multi-language signage, health check information, protocols for dealing with patrons violating social distancing guidelines, and will also include Washington State guidelines once available. To access these resources, go to 4culture.org/reopening-toolkit/

Cornish College of the Arts Continuing Education Classes

In addition to their academic curriculum, Cornish College of the Arts offers adult continuing education classes for those 18 years+. Classes include

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Mark your calendars for an all-digital festival!

The Earshot Jazz Festival returns this year in an all-digital format! Now in its 32nd year, the 2020 festival will be streamed straight to you, with a mix of online concert performances, panel discussions, and an emphasis on racial, social, and gender justice.

Jazz teaches us to listen, learn, and improvise. With our typical programming model upended, we're taking this opportunity to re-envision what a creative, community-focused jazz festival can look like.

Listen

Programming across four weekends, the festival opens with an Earshot-exclusive performance by saxophonist Ravi Coltrane streaming directly from the fabled Birdland Jazz Club in New York City.

The brilliant pianist Gerald Clayton brings an exclusive concert in a duo setting with his father, the re-

vered bassist, educator, and advocate John Clayton.

Demonstrating its abiding commitment to Seattle's resident artists, Earshot's featured Festival Resident Artist for this year is Seattle's own Ahamefule J. Oluo. The multi-talented Oluo is a trumpeter, composer, comedian, actor, and writer whose works for the stage includes musical jazz memoirs

Now I'm Fine, and *Susan*; and for the screen, a newly released feature film *Thin Skin*. Oluo's festival projects include the premier of a new jazz quartet, exclusive video of the large ensemble from *Susan*, collaborative community events, and a virtual-reality house party video: with Nigerian food, real people, and live music in the living

room by the hard-jazz quartet, Industrial Revelation, which he co-founded.

Expect one-of-a-kind performances from pianists Marina Albero, Fred Hersch, Jovino Santos Neto, violinist

Ben Hunter, guitarist Bill Frisell, saxophonists Lakecia Benjamin and Amy Denio, and vocalist Johnaye Kendrick.

Artist and production crew safety is a top priority. Performances will be

streamed from artist homes, or from venues following strict safety measures in compliance with local health mandates. Full line-up and tickets coming soon.

Learn

2020 offers a unique opportunity to examine the structures in place within our jazz community—from education spaces, to jam session culture, to the performance stage, and beyond—through thoughtful community dialogue. Earshot invites community

members to submit panel proposals for consideration. Topics presented through the lens of racial, social, and gender justice are particularly encouraged. Full details and submission form at bit.ly/EJFCommunityPanel.

We're excited to continue our collaboration with Northwest Film Forum with multiple film screening opportunities, all available for streaming from the comfort of your home. Stay tuned for more details.

Improvise

What shapes does jazz take in the year 2020? We're adapting our annual juried series—Jazz: The Second Century—from a live concert setting to a pre-recorded audio or video presentation to be included for the first time during the festival. Artists are invited to use the tools and technology available to them to create a response to what jazz is right now. Selected submissions will be showcased as a watch party during the 2020 festival.

Support

Make a Donation

Your gift of any amount will make an immediate impact as we work to shift our programming and create an engaging festival for our community. Thank you for supporting Earshot Jazz!

Become a Sponsor

An all-digital festival brings new engagement opportunities! Sponsorships are available for individuals, businesses, and community organizations starting at \$250. Email errin@earshot.org to learn more.





Ahamefule Oluo: 2020 Festival Resident Artist



AHAMEFULE J. OLUO BY NAOMI ISHISAKA

By Paul Rauch

Seattle's own Ahamefule J. Oluo is difficult to categorize as an artist. A musician, comedian, composer, director—and the Artist in Residence for the 2020 Earshot Jazz Festival. Oluo committed to the festival prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a pairing that feels only more spot on now. He's not your typical jazz artist, and this isn't your typical jazz festival.

His residency is marked historically by Earshot's decision to deliver the festival digitally to a jazz community starving for live performance during a worldwide pandemic. The festival, now in its 32nd year, is scheduled to stream across four weekends beginning October 16 and features one-

of-a kind performances and community conversations as a salve for trying times.

Art as an agent for processing pain into meaning is something Oluo is no stranger to. His work in music, comedy, theater, and film over the past decade offer nuanced portraits of vulnerability, heartache, and triumph from his personal experiences.

When it comes to jazz, technique and education have noticeably shifted into institutions of higher learning. Oluo, on the other hand, acquired his chops the more traditional way—by way of mentors, and by listening. While his goal has never been to be a jazz trumpeter in the traditional sense, Oluo makes clear that jazz is founda-

tional to nourishing his holistic artistic practice.

"Jazz is my first love, before anything else, says Oluo. "It's the first thing that opened my eyes to what an artistic concept was. I learned everything about life through jazz. I have no formal education. I didn't graduate high school. I went to Cornish one year, but had a child in that year and was barely present. Jazz is my school. Records are my school, the lives of those people."

As a trumpeter, Oluo is most prominently known for his past work with the neo-fusion quartet, Industrial Revelation. Teaming with longtime friends Evan Flory-Barnes, D'Vonne Lewis, and Josh Rawlings, the band attracted a broad audience through a sound that bridged generations and associated musical identities. Oluo's innovative use of electronics added to his naturally dynamic sound, creating a musical persona that fit perfectly into the group's common vision of musical adventurism. The band received a *Stranger* Genius Award in 2014.

In a city with a deep jazz legacy, Oluo makes note of feeling a disconnect with the greater jazz community. Aside from his previous work with Industrial Revelation, he is not known to headline jazz performances, or gig as a sideman. In his earlier days, at jam sessions, he didn't know the seemingly hundreds of tunes more traditional players have down pat. Participation was difficult, in part due to social anxieties. Nonetheless, he would be at the hang Tuesday nights at the Owl 'n Thistle session, contributing when he could, opening ears with his treatment

of ballads, where his rich, deep sound could be best applied.

"I've never been super interested in being a conventional jazz musician," he remarks, choosing instead to focus on performing original tunes of his own and of artistic collaborators.

Oluo's residency at this year's Earshot Jazz Festival will shed light on his manifold artistry, and its impact on

being different from comedy, or acting as being different than either of those things. I approach all these things from a conceptual viewpoint. There's a message I want to convey any way I see fit. Taking your eye off the message is where you can go wrong," he offers.

To Oluo, nailing a perfect trumpet solo is akin to delivering the perfect punchline—and they both hang on

"I've never been super interested in being a conventional jazz musician."

not only Seattle's jazz scene, but the city's greater arts community. "Being a part of this festival allows me to be more connected with the wider jazz scene in Seattle than I've been able to, due to the nature of my work," he says.

The nature of Oluo's work employs a dizzying array of skills. From stand-up comedy, to composing and arranging jazz orchestral pieces, from stage and film acting, to script writing, Oluo channels his creative energy wherever it's being called—leading, so far, to two theater shows and a film.

If you were to describe Oluo in one word, it'd be storyteller. Stand-up is the catalyst that set his storytelling in motion and accelerated his maturity as a multi-dimensional artist. Oluo's creative energy pulled him into stand-up comedy in 2005, when as a young father, he went through the ordeal of a divorce. Comedy provided an antidote to the accompanying depression. "All of my comedy, the catalyst for it, came from dealing with darker sides of my existence," he says. While jazz had opened up a pathway to creative conception, comedy was a revelation that spawned a complete artist. "If jazz is my Charlie Parker, then comedy is my Coltrane," he quips.

For Oluo, the medium is a means to the message. "I actually don't see any of the things I do as being different from each other. I don't think of music

being in relationship with an audience. "The place where I think they're similar, is that when I'm performing, everything has to have a punchline. It has to have that emotional punchline. It has to culminate with some kind of communal emotional shift," he says.

Oluo debuted his life work, *Now I'm Fine*, during a Town Hall residency in

"Taking your eye off the message is where you can go wrong."

2012. The ten-movement pop opera written for a 17-piece orchestra features Oluo's long-form comedic storytelling. He delivers a dark, poignant monologue about a period of illness, tragedy, and regeneration seamlessly coalesced with his original musical score. While he admits his compositional approach is a slow, trial and error process, Oluo has found freedom in trusting his instincts, saying "I trust things that come out of my unconscious brain, more than things that come out of my conscious brain."

Now I'm Fine addresses the absence of Oluo's Nigerian father, the struggles of his single mother, becoming a father himself, getting a divorce, and a mystery illness that dissolved his skin across his entire body—all over the course of an emotionally devastating year. He remarks in his monologue,

"By the time I was 19, I had a daughter, by the time I was 21, I had two daughters. By the time I was 22, I had a vasectomy."

Oluo supplied a narrative of his family history as part of the Chicago Public Media program, *This American Life* with Ira Glass in October 2015. The episode offers a further exploration on Oluo's ties to his Nigerian father and his life with his single mother—a white woman from Kansas. The podcast, which was also broadcast on over 500 stations, brought national attention to Oluo's work and featured his most alluring quality—his ability to intimately engage an audience in his narrative.

An all Seattle music cast contributed to *Now I'm Fine*, most prominently featuring the sparkling vocals of okanomodé SoulChilde. The show opened at On the Boards in December of 2014, then moved to the Moore The-

atre, the Public Theatre in New York, and beyond. A film version, *Thin Skin*, co-written by Charles Mudede and Oluo's wife, Lindy West, is soon to be released following COVID-19 related delays.

Out of *Now I'm Fine* came another story worth expanding—that of his single, white mother, who raised him and his sister, bestselling author Ijeoma Oluo, after her Nigerian husband left to visit his homeland and never returned. That story is called *Susan*, and debuted at On the Boards in December of 2019. Oluo lovingly calls his mother Susan "the most comically optimistic person on earth." The darkly comical musical portrait is incredibly soul-baring. "She loves the show, but the show is not exclusively positive about her," notes Oluo.

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Teaching Jazz in the Schools During COVID-19



JARED SESSINK COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



KELLY CLINGAN BY MICHAEL CRAFT

How will Seattle area jazz band directors teach music this fall, with band rooms shuttered and ensemble music almost completely impossible? That's the question Earshot posed to five directors whose groups participated virtually in the Essentially Ellington finals this past spring. Given the world-renowned excellence of our jazz programs, it's no surprise that Scott Brown (Roosevelt High School), Jared Sessink (Garfield High School), Darin Faul (Mountlake Terrace High School), Bill Leather (Mount Si High School), and Kelly Clingan (Seattle JazzED), are undaunted by the crisis and have come up with an astonishing array of dynamic, creative ideas to turn Covid-19 lemon into jazz lemonade.

Many teachers are taking the pandemic as an opportunity to re-think how they teach music altogether, to try out a variety of new programs, despite the fact that they'll have far less class

time with their students—in Seattle, perhaps less than two hours per week. Because there can be no live rehearsals or performances in school, teachers have had to step up their technological game, exploring programs such as JamKazam, Band Lab, and GarageBand, never mind struggling to make the notoriously time-lagging Zoom more efficient. Using technology has highlighted questions of equity, as all students do not have access to good equipment or internet service.

But working online has its advantages, too. Because travel expenses are irrelevant, directors can offer workshops by international as well as local musicians, who could all use the work. And even with all the disruption of the usual festival and concert season, band instructors are trying to maintain the seasonal stability of at least one, well-honed virtual performance for their communities.

"This is a real opportunity for everyone to look at the top down, authoritative approach of large ensemble classes," says Sessink, who will combine jazz band, concert band, and orchestra for some instruction. "Instead of 'I give you the materials, tell you when the concert deadline is, or tell you you don't know your part,' we look at a bottom up approach that's collaborative, that puts a lot of ownership on the students to have voice in what they want to do."

Sessink was pleasantly surprised, for example, when KUOW asked him for some audio and Garfield students put together a recording of "Body and Soul" on their own, in two days.

"They're collaborating with each other with no direction from their teacher. That's going to be a big component of what we're doing."

In the same vein, over at Roosevelt, Brown envisions the possibility of students getting together in their back yards or basements—with parent approval, of course—for live combo rehearsals, recording performances and sharing them for critiques with him and their peers. At JazzED, Clingan is inviting students and their families to become actively engaged in a timely social justice book program—starting with Ibram X. Kendi's award-winning opus about American racism, *Stamped*. For students who may not necessarily be interested in improvising, JazzEd will also offer Songs of Protest, a class using FlexScores, which have four parts written for every instrument and at different skill levels, too, which allows more access and equity.

Clingan, who has made gender equity a major focus—her all-girls Ellington project is nationally known—has long advocated for a less Eurocentric, gender-inclusive approach to student music.

“This is a golden opportunity to make some radical changes,” she says.

Other innovative programs on offer include Roosevelt’s jazz history project, that ultimately will result in a book; virtual concerts from Mountlake Terrace assembled by Faul from individual student tracks, using Adobe Creative Suite, and a possible “open mic” night for students; JazzED’s Digital Jam of the Week, already active in August; a collaboration between Boxley’s, in North Bend, and Mount Si High School that has already resulted in a variety of virtual performances online; more theory and ear training classes in general; as well as a bigger emphasis on how to produce quality recordings.

Many of these new programs involve a steep technological learning curve, for teachers as well as students. When I talked to Faul, he had just signed up for a webinar in JamKazam and had also boned up on Audacity, the free online recording tool, which his students will use this year.

For families who do not have good internet access or an available smart device, the Seattle School District has guaranteed that every student will have a laptop, says Sessink, though Clingan points out that good Wi-Fi is usually more of a problem.

“One of the solutions is pointing students toward public spaces that have Wi-Fi,” she says.

So if you see some kids with saxophones out in a McDonald’s parking lot this fall, don’t be surprised. They’re just trying to track that last chorus of “Giant Steps.”

Seattle area bands have a long history of workshop experience with well-known musicians, but in 2020 there will be even more of that. Seattle play-

ers such as Steve Treseler, Kate Olson, Jared Hall, Johnaye Kendrick, Michael Glynn, and Marino Albero have already stepped in, as have musicians from the wider world, including Terell Stafford, who worked with Mount Si kids last spring, and ex-Seattleite Dawn Clement, who tutored Roosevelt. This fall, a colleague of Sessink’s in Detroit will offer students from all the Garfield ensembles a virtual tour of his recording studio, as part of his Creative Artist Workshop series.

But innovations aside, band directors realize that a mainstay of the school music year is honing a piece of music

and playing it for your community. That’s why Brown still intends to present, one way or another, Duke Ellington’s *Nutcracker Suite*.

“We want to keep that tradition alive,” says Brown. “The kids look forward to that. It’s funny, I never thought this is what would happen, but a lot of these kids came to see that when they were in third or fourth grade, and that’s why they wanted to get into the band, so they could play that music.”

—Paul de Barros



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COVID-19 Impact on Teaching Artists

COVID-19 has had profound effects on our community since our first community survey in March, 2020. We understand many performing artists are also private music instructors and teaching artists within education centers. We sent out an informal survey to our community in order to hear about individual experience over the last 5 months navigating teaching music lessons in a digital world. Below is a selection of those responses. Thank you to everyone who participated! A list of instructors can be found on page 13.

Average Lessons per Week

Of the 12 responders, 100% have continued to offer lessons over the last five months, with 58.3% offering remote/digital lessons for the first time. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, on average, 58.3% taught 7 or more lessons a week, 16.7% taught 4–6 lessons a week, 8.3% taught 2–4 lessons a week, and 16.7% taught 0–2 lessons a week.

Since April, on average, the number of music lessons has remained the same, 58.3% reporting 7 or more per week, 16.7% reporting 4–6, 8.3% reporting 2–4, and 16.7% reporting 0–2 lessons per week.

83.3% of survey responders plan to continue to teach remotely after COVID-19 poses a lower risk (i.e. after a vaccine). Kate Olson noted offering lessons remotely will depend on

demand and the re-opening of the West Seattle Bridge, while Neil Welch responded that he “will likely offer make up lessons online and will continue to teach some folks online where accessing lessons through in-person study is difficult. This includes students that find driving to lessons too costly time-wise or money-wise, or for those taking lessons online from a different city.”

Video Platforms & Learning Tools

Ranked most used to least used
Zoom—91.7% have used
Skype—50% have used
FaceTime—66.7% have used
Google Hangouts—33.3% have used
JamKazam, Google Drive, Dropbox, Tonara, Teachable, and Canvas were mentioned often in the responses.

Joe Eck added, “The website ‘groovescape’ has been HUGE for making online drum lessons more user friendly for myself and my students.”

Dmitri Matheny offered this tip: “I keep my lesson notes in Evernote—really helps me stay organized especially because I can have it open on the

desktop next to the Zoom window. I can even screenshot things I write out for them using Zoom’s “whiteboard” function, then drag it into Evernote right with my lesson notes. I can drag PDFs of stuff they’re working on into their lesson notes too.”

Challenges of Online Lessons

As one might imagine, teaching music online during a global pandemic (and subsequent economic crisis) comes with a host of challenges, most notably latency/reliability of con-

nection, engagement/focus, and, of course, not being in the same room. Here’s what teaching artists had to say: “1. It is largely impossible to play together at the same time with video chat

software. The joyful, deeply human connectivity of simultaneous sound making in a room together is noticeably absent at every moment with online lessons. Sending videos back and

forth is helpful—call and response is helpful—but nothing beats hearing each other's sound bouncing back and forth in a room together.

2. I have found it very challenging to meet the various needs of my students with a strictly online learning format, particularly those with learning disabilities.

3. For many low-income students, online lessons are simply not feasible because of a lack of internet connection, unavailable funds to pay for lessons, and a lack of personal space to make music in their home environment. Online lessons require a strong (or at least decent) internet connection, a space in which to play music and money to pay for all that. The gap between wealthy and low-income students in my studio has widened. Prior to fully online lessons I had far more low-income students in my studio. The access gap in private lessons was a tremendous problem that already existed in Seattle prior to COVID-19, and I anticipate it will be made worse through a predominantly online lesson format.” —Neil Welch

Benefits of Online Lessons

While teaching music online is, undoubtedly, a challenge, it's not without its benefits—most notably, the lack of commute and the safety of remaining socially distant and healthy. Here's what teaching artists had to say:

“I love being able to use my own gear and not having to travel long distances to do lessons. A lot of my students have shown huge progress since switching to online as well.” —Joe Eck

“1. I am a better prepared and more highly organized teacher now that I have learned to teach my full studio online. I have to speak with clarity and brevity when articulating my learning expectations. I talk less and play more. This has led to stronger musicianship from many of my students.

“Teaching songs is more difficult due to Wi-Fi lag. Some younger students have trouble keeping focused throughout the lessons.” —Joe Eck

“It's almost impossible to address tone production in any kind of meaningful way. It's exhausting to be in front of a screen all day. My students' internet connections are often spotty. We can't play together due to latency.” —Kate Olson

“Not being able to play in sync, hearing an accurate representation of my student's sound, internet connection.” —Steve Treseler

“Well, obviously it's difficult with beginners especially not to be able to use touch to help them learn their basic technique. It's resolvable via video chat; it just takes more words. In my studio, the more frustrating limitation is actually with advanced students who are building their improvisation and collaborative musicality skills. Not being able to play together, with a two-way flow of lag-free sound, really limits our ability to build those skills organically. It takes a lot of creative thinking to find ways to keep building those skills without that ability to play together.” —Kat Bula



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2. I have integrated recording technology into my lessons at a much more refined level since beginning to teach online full time. Students as well as myself have become accustomed to sending recordings, videos, using apps, creating pdf's, generating music notation files, composing songs, etc. as part of a natural and fluid process in our collaboration.

3. I am spending more hours at home and zero hours in traffic. This fills my spirit with more energy, and leaves

me with more time and eagerness to tackle my own craft, even on days where I have a heavy teaching load.”
—*Neil Welch*

“Besides not having to stop during a pandemic? I’d say the biggest [benefit] is about geography. I’ve had students from all over the world find me because they couldn’t find a local teacher. Local students were already availing themselves of online lessons at times, too—from their hotel rooms on business trips, from their home of-

fices when they were on childcare duty or there was a snowstorm... or just because it was a particularly bad traffic day!” —*Kat Bula*

“No commute, no studio rent, wearing pajama bottoms, being able to work with students through the pandemic, and seeing many students dramatically improve because they have more time to practice.” —*Susan Palmer*

“Being able to develop skills and self-sufficiency that would have taken longer otherwise.” —*Jory Tindall*

Income

Prior to COVID-19 33.3% of those surveyed said that 50–75% of their income came from teaching. 25% reported 50–75% of income from teaching, 25% reported 0–25% in-

come from teaching, 8.3% reported 25–50% income from teaching, and 8.3% said roughly 50%, varied month to month.

In the last five months 75% reported that 75–100% of their income has come from teaching, with 25% reporting 0–25% of income from teaching.

Preparing for Fall

As fall approaches and the reality of social distancing settles in for the long term, here’s how some teaching artists are preparing:

“Launching new online courses, collaborating with school music programs, developing group improvisation workshops over Zoom, starting a new company called Infinite Improvisation.” —*Steve Treseler*

“Thinking about creating more visual video learning content. Trying to plan group online classes so students can have interaction.” —*Rachel Bade-McMurphy*

“I am working hard to expand my understanding of online learning tools, such as recording technology and new collaborative music apps. I am connecting with parents, teach-

ers, musicians, and students to discuss what kinds of learning styles and pedagogical techniques work best for each individual student. I am also working several hours per week to recruit new students in an effort to maintain income flow.” —*Neil Welch*

What else would you like us to know?

“Regular gig life probably isn’t coming back any time soon. I really think it would be in any musician’s best interest to start taking their work online in any capacity. I’m happy to help out anyone who would like some advice!” —*Joe Eck*

“I can’t wait for this to be over. At the start of the lockdown I was making 30–50% of my income from performing, and was considering raising the bar for entry into my private teaching studio. Now, all that perfor-

mance income is gone, and I need my students more than they need me. It’s terrifying, humbling, and miserable all at the same time. I haven’t applied for income support because I am continuing to work, but I miss performing so much it’s like a physical ache.” —*Kate Olson*

“I am gravely concerned that there will be a “lost generation” of music students due to a lack of enrollment for elementary music study. Without the support of in-person learning and the

fun and collaborative nature of a classroom, I fear many younger students will want to wait to join music classes for when they can resume in person, only to never actually give it a shot. As a performer and private teacher, I believe I have a responsibility to help the next generation of music students find their voice. This is all the more challenging with an online teaching format, but I must do my part to work creatively to help students find their way to musical study.” —*Neil Welch*

"It would be interesting to have a conversation about online group classes as well. I and several other music teachers I know have been exploring different strategies in this area. One thing that is surprising many of us is finding that many people actually really like being able to mute themselves during group play! It takes some pressure off while they're building confidence. I wouldn't want students to get addicted to that, but it's fun to see that the disconnection is actually a silver lining for some

folks at the same time that they're getting to connect with other students in a class setting." —*Kat Bula*

"I've developed more skills by moving all my teaching online; I have new ways of explaining/demonstrating concepts, and my lessons flow in a different way. I think students are getting a lot from online instruction, and I think when we get through COVID-19, there will be a new class of really incredible players to check out."

—*Susan Palmer*

Teaching Artists for Digital Lessons

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Rae *Internal Volume* Self-Released

One challenge of life over the past few months of the global pandemic has been finding ways to navigate through the noise and uncertainty of everyday life, to stay grounded and focused on a constant. It is an almost daily quest to sift through the unceasing stimuli of human existence in 2020 to find a place to calm the mind and capture the increasingly nervous energy permeating our collective realities. Fitting, in this context, for local avant-jazz trio, Rae, to put out their first album, the self-released *Internal Volume*. The individuals of Rae have not only an academic understanding of jazz, but also a deep emotional and instinctual relationship with the artform. Working as a unit, bassist Abbey Blackwell, guitarist Ronan Delisle, and drummer Evan Woodle give an examination of

atmospheric quietude centered within a context of complex disjointedness.

Each track on *Internal Volume* is identified by a number instead of a name. For example, the seventh track on the album is “03,” the fourth track is “15,” and so on. This allows for the listener to interpret the music based not on clues gleaned by song titles in the traditional sense, but instead through free association based on the soundscapes the music itself creates. On first listen the collection of songs presents a nervous, pensive atmosphere. The steady, measured bass serves as a counterpoint to the rolling, snare-heavy drums, creating a polyrhythm that pulls in many directions, while the guitar speaks over the percussive foundation, playing a game of cat-and-mouse with the listener. However, once the motif is snagged a world of different images and emotions is unraveled.

The ability of the members of Rae to play off each other and move toward a deeply textured, multifaceted, unified



whole is undeniable. Rae guides us on their musical journey through their varied twists and turns, presenting new paths and valleys, allowing space for us to create new meaning along the way. The music is itself an aural representation of calm amidst chaos. *Internal Volume* exhorts the listener to listen to the chaos inside and orient the self toward a steady calm.

—Grant Grays

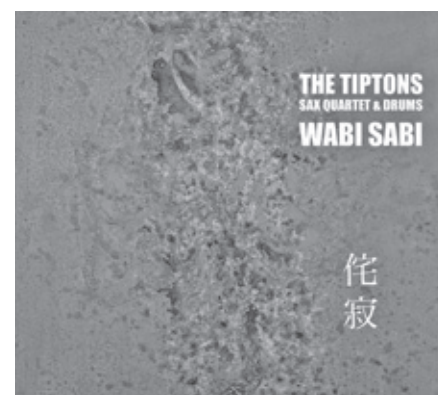
Tiptons Sax Quartet & Drums *Wabi Sabi* Self-released

Impermanence, imperfection, and incompleteness are qualities captured by the elusive Japanese aesthetic concept of “wabi-sabi.” Recording since 1988, the Tiptons Saxophone Quartet has, over the years, been anything but ephemeral. Though well-rehearsed, their latest release embraces the rough-hewn and raucous, delivering far cries and funky breakdowns within polished arrangements.

Kudos to drummer Robert Kainar, who keeps the heat on under the concoctions of saxophonists Amy Denio,

Jessica Lurie, Sue Orfield, and Tina Richerson, from the mardis gras blow-out of “Jouissance” to the boom-slap drive of “Working Song.” The quartet’s thick, interlocking melodies are nothing accidental; like the house band of an infernal carnival, the five bring Balkan vibes to minor marches such as “Root Dance” and fiercely testifying solos to the steady snap of “Memory Bait.”

Each knows their part, and through their collaboration and communication, the Tiptons’ are positively upbeat. On “El Gran Orinador,” they slap on a lurching salsa, Richerson’s baritone bass lines playing off the soulful vibrato of the latter. Their solid and confident reed technique, reminiscent of the Latin American brass



tradition, weightlessly holds up this kind of arrangement, audible as well on the swelling drift of the slower, almost neo-classical “Torqueing of the Spheres.”

The ensemble’s use of sung voice also stands out, pulling in and out of the

instrumental texture. It really pops in an all-voice break at the second part of the high tempo shuffle, “Moadl Joadl,” where the inventive use of yodeling and other vocal techniques, along with hocketing claps, infectiously matches the group’s rhythmic eclecticism.

As if a ghostly parade suddenly appeared tramping through the streets and alleys of the city, the melodies of *Wabi Sabi* summon a grandiose fanfare of the everyday. It’s a blustery march: cheerful, mournful, graceful, full of wild cries and incantations, but exuberant, ample, and even by beauty, unresolved.

—Ian Gwin

Notes, from page 3

film editing, songwriting and recording, music licensing and publishing, music for film, games, and TV, among others. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, these classes are being offered remotely. For details visit cornish.edu/extensions-programs/continuing-education/#

Washington State Students Perform at Jazz Aspen Snowmass

Several graduates from Washington state recently performed at the Jazz Aspen Snowmass Academy in collaboration with the Frost School of Music at The University of Miami. Participating students from the local area include Andrew Torgelson on saxophone (Garfield High School graduate), Leo Folsom on piano (Roosevelt High School graduate), Nicholas Roels on drums (Redmond), and Jonathan Bumpus on trombone (a graduate from the jazz program at Whitworth University, Spokane). The all-scholarship JAS Academy program ran from July 26–August 9 and was under the direction of Christian McBride; Frost School of Music’s Dean, Shelly Berg, and Program Director for Jazz, Chuck Bergeron. For details visit jazzaspensnowmass.org

SFJAZZ Announces Cancellation

SFJAZZ announces the cancellation of the first half of the 2020–2021 season, indicating that there will be no shows with live audiences from September through December. They hope

to open the season in the coming year and will continue to follow the guidance provided by local, state, and federal agencies in planning their eventual reopening. Despite not being able to present to live audiences SFJAZZ plans to expand their digital offerings. For information visit sfjazz.org.

Jazz Coalition Announces Second Round of Funding

Jazz Coalition announces a second round of funding, giving artists the means to create new works, whilst they are unable to work. Artists are nominated by Jazz Coalition members, and are selected by a jury of their peers to receive \$1,000 commission grants. When assembly restrictions are lifted, commission recipients will premiere their new works at Jazz Coalition member venues. Some of the artists included in the second round are Darius Jones, Eric Revis, Fabian Almazan, Helen Sung, Makaya McCraven, Fay Victor, and Carmen Staaf. More information about the commission recipients can be found at jazzcoalition.org

Chamber Music America’s 2021 Conference Goes Virtual

Due to ongoing travel restrictions and COVID-19 health concerns surrounding large gatherings, CMA will hold their 2021 conference virtually. The new dates for the conference are January 11–15. Visit conference.chamber-music.org for details.

Oluo, from page 7

Susan was to go on tour in 2020, plans altered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Oluo expresses a mixture of wistfulness and sense of deep appreciation in this moment: “My experience is always directed at the musicians I’m working with,” he remarks. “I was supposed to be touring with *Susan* all year, going to all these different places with a group of people who are absolutely some of my favorite people in the world. As much as I appreciated [touring] before, my appreciation for it has skyrocketed. To be in a world where that is possible would be amazing.”

It was a great letdown. A year of touring with this show that had been in the works for five years has become a phantom image of some diminishing flicker of hope in the distant future. To Oluo, that last show in New York in January had been where they had finally gotten it right. One show to feel the culmination of countless hours of hard work. “That last show, we really got it right,” he states emphatically.

Oluo’s adaptability and willingness to follow the creative energy to the form positions him to be an engaging force as the Earshot Jazz Resident Artist, as the festival embraces an all new digital landscape. Attendees can expect to see video projects from Oluo’s home studio in the Hood Canal region. The festival offers a unique opportunity to not only witness Oluo’s talent as a trumpeter and composer, but to delve further into all of the tools in his artistic toolbox.

Whether he is spinning a comedic monologue, composing for and directing a jazz orchestra, or blowing a long blues into the night, Oluo brings a voracious energy driven by curiosity. Of the many shapes his creative energy takes, Oluo states simply, “It’s an exploration of how we deal with things.”



AHAMEFULE J. OLUO BY NAOMI ISHISAKA

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