



Trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire (second from left) performed with a group of student musicians that included saxophonist Aaron Shaw and trombonist Jeffery Miller at Yoshi's in San Francisco on Feb. 26.



Geri Allen at Howard University on April 7

RON CESAR

Monk All-Stars Hit the Road

DURING ITS WINTER TOUR OF NORTHERN California, the Thelonious Monk National Performing Arts High School All-Star Jazz Sextet made music, important connections and even a bit of history.

Six young musicians from around the country (including students from New York, Houston and New Orleans) gathered at the UCLA-based institute before heading north to conduct a week of Peer-to-Peer Jazz Education programs in San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland public schools. The tour, which included a concert at Yoshi's in San Francisco, introduced the student-performers to the rigors of the road and provided the opportunity to work with and learn from professionals, including trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire and vocalist Lisa Henry.

Even more valuable, the school sessions enabled the teens to deepen their understanding and appreciation of jazz's timeless values. In speaking with and performing for their Bay Area peers, the student-musicians came to embody jazz's core tenets of celebrating diversity with unity and fostering individual creativity with group cooperation. They also exemplified the direct correlation between hard work and achieving your dreams.

"The ensemble is teaching kids that there is more to music than rock 'n' roll and hip-hop," said Dr. J.B. Dyas, Monk Institute vice president for education and curriculum development. "But the larger message is, 'We are doing good things with our lives—and you can do something good with your lives.' And when kids see peers up there, they say, 'Maybe I can do my thing.'"

The week concluded with a different variety of peer interaction as the Monk Institute All-Star Jazz Sextet visited the Dave Brubeck Institute at University of the Pacific. Founded in 2000, the Stockton institute's mission is to further Brubeck's lifelong dedication to education, community engagement and having music serve as a

catalyst for social change.

The two organizations enjoy a close relationship. Dyas served as the Brubeck Institute's first executive director from 2001-'05. Three of the five current Brubeck Institute Fellows are Monk Institute All-Star Jazz Sextet veterans with Peer-to-Peer experience.

"That helped me come to the Brubeck Institute," vibraphonist Joel Ross, 18, said of the program. "I learned musical ideas on that tour, and I found a best friend. It was the first step toward becoming a professional musician."

"It's definitely been a life-changing experience," said sextet pianist Franchesca Romero, 18. "Ambrose Akinmusire is a really good person, and he inspired all of us and literally changed our perception of and approach to music."

Given the institutes' ties, there were plenty of warm greetings and familiar faces when the two ensembles met on a Friday night during the tour. Some musicians in the Brubeck Institute Jazz Quintet were backing a local pianist at a night-spot just off campus and members of both groups dropped by to sit in. The musicians had a more formal combo session the next morning at Pacific's Conservatory of Music.

This type of peer interaction is essential to every musician's development, said Brubeck Institute Associate Director Nicholas Fryer, noting that connections made now can yield collaborators and gigs in the years to come.

"For the students to come together and collaborate, that's always great," Fryer said. "But it's more than that. These people are not only your peers; you're also starting out your professional careers together."

The Monk Institute All-Star Jazz Sextet concluded its tour in concert with the Brubeck Institute Jazz Quintet at Stockton's San Joaquin Delta College. The evening ended with the ensembles sharing the stage for a rousing Monk-Brubeck medley.

—Brian McCoy

Howard Centennial: Students and faculty at Howard University in Washington, D.C., had two reasons to celebrate recently. The university's music department marks its 100th anniversary in 2014, and Howard presented its seventh annual Jazz Week on April 7–12. Pianist Geri Allen, an HU alumnus, was a guest artist for the Alumni Jazz Concert Gala. Also featured were Afro Blue, Traces of Blue, the Howard University Jazz Ensemble and the HUJE Alumni Jazz Ensemble with guest flugelhornist Hugh Masekela. Other Jazz Week activities included a panel discussion tracing the history of jazz studies at HU; several seminars on the business of jazz; a master class for high school students; and a concert by The Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra Small Ensemble. **More info:** howard.edu

Minnesota Workshops: McNally Smith College of Music will offer Summer Workshops at its campus in downtown St. Paul, Minn. Weeklong camps for teenage musicians (age 13 and up) focusing on voice, guitar, jazz and hip-hop are scheduled for June 26–July 1, while an immersive Music Industry eXperience (MIX) camp is scheduled for Aug. 20–25. All campers enjoy access to the same professional-grade facilities available to the college's full-time students. **More info:** mcnallysmith.edu/summer/workshops

Rising Trajectory: On April 16, pianist Aaron Diehl's trio (with bassist Paul Sikivie and drummer Lawrence Leathers) became the most recent act to play the "Live at RWU" concert series at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I. "Aaron Diehl is an emerging jazz superstar whose trajectory continues to rise," said Robert M. Eisinger, dean of the university's Feinstein College of Arts and Sciences. "[Diehl's] trio embraces the past as they imaginatively forge the future of jazz." The free, open-to-the-public concert was offered in association with the Newport Jazz Festival. **More info:** rwu.edu

Summer Immersion: The University of Central Oklahoma will present its fourth annual summer jazz camp, open to all instrumentalists age 14 and up, June 22–27. The camp will be an immersive musical experience and will provide the opportunity to learn from UCO faculty and special guests. **More info:** ucojazzlab.com