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ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

LAUSD Students Open Day 2 Of Hollywood Bowl Jazz Festival

By LAist Staff

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J.B. Dyas (left) is vice president of education and curriculum development at the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz and co-directs the LAUSD Beyond the Bell All-City Jazz Big Band.

(Courtesy of J.B. Dyas)

The [Hollywood Bowl Jazz Festival](#) returned this weekend after a pandemic hiatus, and opening the show on Sunday will be some of the brightest up-and-coming musicians in the area — LAUSD students.

The Los Angeles Unified School District's [Beyond The Bell All-City Jazz Band](#) is made up of the best student musicians in L.A.'s public schools. They're part of a two-day event hosted by Arsenio Hall and including some big-name headliners like The Roots, Gregory Porter, and Tower of Power.

“This is the cream of the crop,” said [J.B. Dyas](#), Vice President for Education and Curriculum Development at the [Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz](#) and co-director of the LAUSD Beyond the Bell All-City Jazz Big Band. “We’re finally able to play together in person, and it’s

amazing how well it's come together these past couple weeks of rehearsals. I think it might be our best band yet."

Kai Tano, a tenor saxophonist in the band, just graduated from Taft High School in Woodland Hills. He's now majoring in music at Pasadena City College and hopes to transfer to a UC conservatory or a music school on the East Coast.

Tano and Dyas spoke with our newsroom's public affairs show [AirTalk With Larry Mantle](#).

"Everyone in L.A. knows how famous this venue is," Tano said. "It's a very surreal feeling to be able to perform on a stage with the same people we considered role models. And being able to perform on such a stage with very talented high school players, it's an honor to be right next to them playing these tunes."

While some jazz fans worry about how the art form can appeal to younger listeners and musicians, Dyas said jazz is in good hands with these students.

"These kids are so into it and are so much more advanced than when I was their age," Dyas said.

The students have been learning big band skills like playing in tune and playing with feeling, but they've also been discussing bigger concepts like what jazz represents and like teamwork and unity within ethnic diversity, he said.

"And there's probably no better example of democracy than a jazz group, because it's individual freedom but with responsibility to the group," Dyas said. "And probably most important, it teaches everyone the vital importance of really listening to each other."

The LAUSD All-City Jazz Band's performance opens the second day of the Jazz Fest on Sunday at 3:30 pm. Another L.A. student band, [L.A. County High School for the Arts Jazz](#), were scheduled to play on Saturday.