

BACKCOUNTRY
JAZZ
GREENWICH
JAZZ FESTIVAL
2022/2023
REPORT

Celebrating our 15th year in 2023,
BackCountry Jazz preserves and expands
the rich tradition of the only uniquely
American art form - Jazz, through creation,
presentation, and education.

BackCountry Jazz (BCJazz) is an essential
partner in Fairfield County's cultural landscape
and reaches students and audiences through
tuition-free music education programs and the
Greenwich Jazz Festival.

Committed to music education, BCJazz's
innovative programs engage young people with
concerts, music lessons, workshops, master
classes, performance opportunities, mentorships,
internships, and support to pursue college.

BCJazz's Greenwich Jazz Festival presents
world-renowned and emerging jazz artists
providing exciting music experiences
for audiences through free outdoor concerts.

Dear Friends,

Jazz music is, at its best, both entertaining and aspirational. The rhythms of this music are as infectious as any popular or global music. Its melodies find their roots in the tradition of the American song. Its harmonies range from the most basic blues structures to the chromaticism of early 20th-century classical music. Dizzy Gillespie once advised a young jazz musician to “keep one foot in the future and one foot in the blues.” That’s a good guide for us all to follow in seeing this music into the future.

Most music, from classical to pop and country, is preconceived. Jazz is different in that it happens in real-time. The jazz musician is ideally trained to create and interact spontaneously. We try to incorporate this aesthetic in our BCJazz concerts and the skills we teach our students. The goal is to make music that reaches the listener on an emotional level. This is a challenging task that we approach with humility.



In our education programs, we teach these principles. Key to this is our innovative technique to develop a strong sense of rhythm. Sonny Rollins, Miles Davis, and Dizzy Gillespie were all vocal in their insistence that rhythm is the essence of the music. In addition to being the prime means of communication with the audience, it is also the gateway to bypassing conscious thinking to make music in the moment.

We were proud to present some of my favorite artists in jazz today as part of our 2023 Greenwich Jazz Festival. Among the highlights were concerts with Simon Moullier, Akiko Tsuruga, Terell Stafford, Julieta Eugenio, and Joe Magnarelli, ending with a memorable concert with Herlin Riley, Godwin Louis, Peter Washington, Donald Vega, and the young vocalist Tyreek McDole.

At the summer music camp this year, we trained young musicians who had no understanding of song form or harmony to improvise on sophisticated tunes like “Embraceable You.” This was a major accomplishment. We are also very happy that former students returned from college to participate as interns and teaching apprentices.

In the coming season, we look forward to growing our education programs by actively working with Bridgeport educators to expand our weekly after-school program and restart our annual city-wide public school youth concerts. Additionally, plans are underway to develop awareness of the Greenwich Jazz Festival in surrounding towns in Fairfield and Westchester County, building audiences and establishing Greenwich as a home for Jazz.

The accomplishments of our programs are possible only thanks to the generosity of our family of supporters. I am deeply grateful to our Patrons and Friends, who provide the steady needed support toward funding BCJazz’s artistic and education programming.

Thank you to the Trustees of the University of Bridgeport, who provide space year after year for our After School Jazz Workshop Program, Summer Music Camp, and Young People’s Concerts, and to the many principals of the Bridgeport Public Schools for their partnership in facilitating our In School Concerts.

I hope this report inspires you to continue to believe in BCJazz’s efforts and our time-tested ability to build a community of students, alumni, faculty, extraordinary jazz artists, audiences, and jazz fans alike here in Greenwich and beyond.

Thank you for encouraging our aspirations and joining us in nurturing the creative spirit through the world of music.

Bennie Wallace
Artistic Director

Impact

15 years

Music Education

27,000+ students served by BackCountry Jazz music programs

2022 - 23

Music Education

more than 1,200 young people in Bridgeport and surrounding areas this year

Summer Music Camp

7,200 hours of summer learning

1,320 free lunches provided at summer music camp

After School Jazz Workshops

1,440 hours of lessons and workshops

The BackCountry Jazz BeBoppers

student performing ensemble 10 public performances

In School Concerts

1,200+ public school students

Instrument Program

3 recipients awarded professional level instruments

100% of students receive music and instrument supplies

Mentorship Program

6 high school and college students mentored

Internship and Apprentice Program

3 BCJazz alumnae hired as teaching apprentices

3 BCJazz alumnae hired as interns

24 teaching artists hired

6 BCJazz high school graduates accepted to college music programs with scholarships

100% of BCJazz students access our programs for free

99% of BCJazz students go on to college

Greenwich Jazz Festival 2022 and 2023

15 free outdoor concerts

3,700+ attendees

34 jazz artists

John D'earth Workshop



Carmen Intorre Jr. Workshop



Aaron Goldberg Workshop



Matt Dwonszyk Workshop



In School Concerts with Bennie Wallace and Godwin Louis

Music Education

BackCountry Jazz's hallmarks include innovative music instruction, challenging material, a low student to teacher ratio, an emphasis on close listening to the masters and each other, and access to BCJazz's broad network of music professionals, performing artists and educators who inspire, coach and challenge students to master their instruments.

Our program is a learning experience and strives to expand young people's musical knowledge and encourage imaginative thinking and creativity, while teaching the values jazz represents: teamwork, respect, and freedom with responsibility.

BCJazz engages the creative spirit of young musicians, encourages self-expression, and fosters the joy of accomplishment that comes with the experience of playing music with others.

Students learn to think on their feet, instilling confidence and courage, as they experience the cultural and timeless beauty of great art.

Instructed by our faculty of jazz masters, music professionals, university music professors, and held on the campus of the University of Bridgeport, our Music Education programs include:

Summer Music Camp

A four-week full day jazz immersion experience for Bridgeport area students, ages 10-20. Our tuition-free summer camp offers instruction in composition and improvisation; ensemble teamwork on brass, woodwind, string, and percussion instruments; and vocal skills training. Instrumental and vocal students also receive instruction to develop key skills and enhance knowledge in the fundamentals of music, emphasizing listening skills, and the art of performance. Our free Nutritious Meals Program provides lunch for all campers.

After School Jazz Workshops

Students receive individual lessons and group workshops focusing on improvisation, ear training, jazz technique, and ensemble playing, on Fridays from 3-6pm, throughout the academic year. Students participate to elevate their musicianship through an emphasis on teamwork, creativity, and self-expression.

The BackCountry Jazz BeBoppers

The BCJazz BeBoppers is a 12 member ensemble of our advanced students who perform together year-round. Having gained local popularity as an in-demand performing group, they play at local festivals, events, churches, and venues in and surrounding Fairfield County.

Instrument Program

Owning an instrument gives students a profound sense of pride and accomplishment. Through this program, professional level instruments are awarded to students who demonstrate talent and commitment to music. BCJazz also aids with instrument supplies, maintenance costs and more to ensure students have what they need to continue to pursue and increase their studies in music.

Young People's Concerts

A live concert experience for Bridgeport students in a theater setting. The program teaches young people about Jazz through the performance of the works of iconic jazz masters as well as new compositions. Works by Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Thelonious Monk have been featured in past concerts. Led by Bennie Wallace, with internationally renowned jazz artists, these concerts create a first awareness and exposure to jazz music. Through our experience, we have learned that jazz is unique in that its excitement and spontaneity engage young people on a non-intellectual, emotional level without the need for explanation. This makes them more receptive to verbal interaction. These concerts have been a key tool in recruiting students into our education programs.

In School Concerts

The entry point to our educational programs, elementary, middle, and high school students are introduced to BCJazz through our in-school concerts in Bridgeport public schools. Shows feature a mix of performers, including those on trumpet, tenor saxophone, alto saxophone, guitar, piano, bass, drums, and vocalists. Led by Bennie Wallace in collaboration with fellow saxophonist and Bridgeport native Godwin Louis, these lecture demonstration-style programs introduce students to Jazz.

Mentorship Program

Designed for our most highly motivated students and BCJazz alums, mentees are paired with prominent working professionals to reinforce their passion for learning, ensuring their continued creative input and musical growth. Mentors include tenor saxophonist Bennie Wallace; pianist Aaron Goldberg; drummer Carmen Intorre Jr; trombonist Steve Davis; alto saxophonist Godwin Louis (Assistant Professor, Berklee School of Music); trumpeter, composer John D'earth (Director of Jazz Performance, University of Virginia)

Internship and Apprentice Program

BCJazz alums return to our programs after graduating high school to work with students as hired interns and apprentices during our summer music camp. Alums assist BCJazz faculty in teaching workshops and classes, as well as learning arts administration basics.

Greenwich Jazz Festival

The festival presents outstanding concerts featuring performances by some of the world's finest jazz artists and young rising stars.

Concerts are free and presented in beautiful, casual open-air settings each summer.

In producing and presenting the festival, BCJazz strengthens Greenwich and Fairfield County as a vibrant center for Jazz and a premier cultural destination.

The best in Jazz happens in Greenwich.

GREENWICH
JAZZ
FESTIVAL
2023

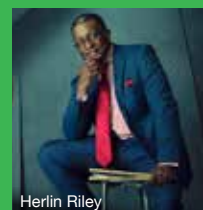
BACKCOUNTRY JAZZ



Bennie Wallace



Terrell Stafford



Herlin Riley



Peter Washington



Akiko Tsuruga



Anthony Wilson



Donald Vega



Bill Frisell



Joe Magnarelli



Samara Joy



Tyreek McDole



Godwin Louis



Ken Peplowski



Matt Munisteri



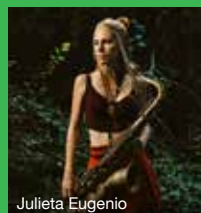
Nasheet Waits



Russell Malone



Simon Moullier



Julieta Eugenio



Quiana Lynell



Bruce Barth



Yasushi Nakamura



Billy Drummond



Emmet Cohen



Matt Wilson



Matt Dwonczyk



Carmen Intorre, Jr.



Chris Morrison



Gary Versace



Harvel Nakundi



Steve Davis



Sean Mason



Steve Kroon



Mark Helias



Vinton Hines Jr.



Herlin Riley and
Peter Washington
July 30



Julieta Eugenio and Matt Dwonszyk
September 10



Bennie Wallace, Godwin Louis, Donald Vega,
Peter Washington and Herlin Riley
July 30



Greenwich
Jazz Festival
Opening Night
June 8



Tyreek McDole and
Godwin Louis
October 15



Greenwich Jazz Festival August 20



Simon Moullier
June 8

Thank you

to our major supporters for their generosity, commitment and investment in BackCountry Jazz.

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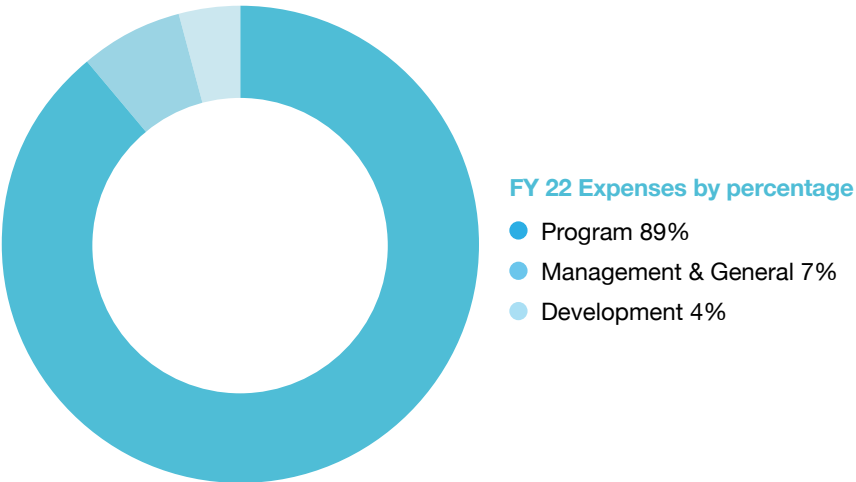
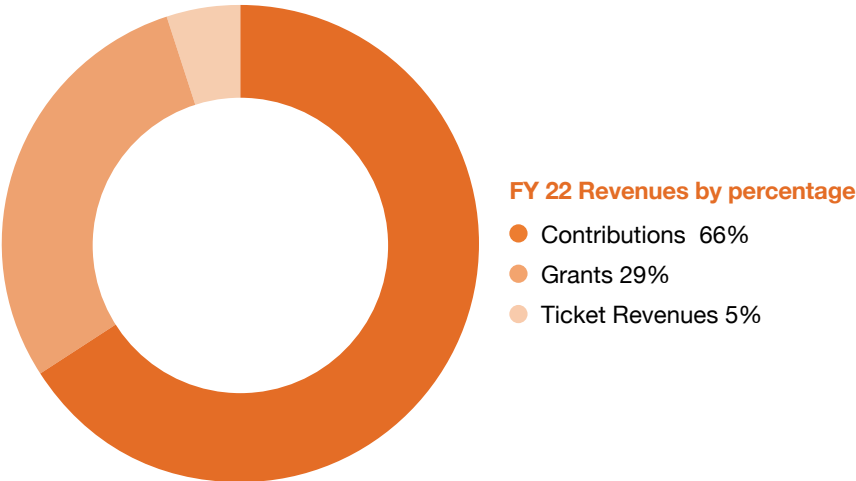
Development Director

Eba Taylor



As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, every donor's decision to make a gift is vital to BackCountry Jazz's ability to fulfill our mission of transforming young lives and building community through the power of music.

We remain grateful to the many individuals, foundations, and government agencies that make it possible for us to provide our educational and concert programming. Thank you for the role you continue to play in ensuring BCJazz succeeds, inspiring and serving people through music for many years to come.



1 in 3

Children in Bridgeport, CT live in poverty*

7.5K

One year of private music lessons and master classes for a non-BCJazz student**

\$100+

Average cost of a one hour private music lesson or master class**

\$0

BCJazz music lessons and master classes are free for students

* <http://www.ryasap.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/State-of-the-Child-2019.pdf>

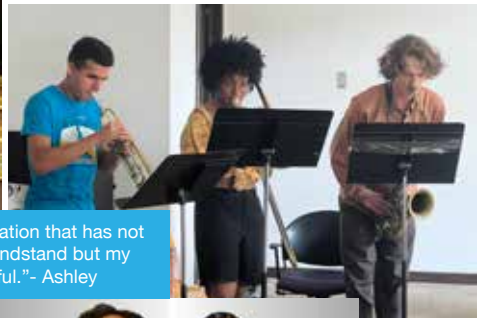
** Based on information gathered from the Tri-State area in 2020.



"I'm grateful to be a part of the BackCountry Jazz family and form lifelong relationships with my fellow peers and mentors. I've been able to learn from professional working musicians that are currently on the scene. I love and appreciate this program." - Joanna



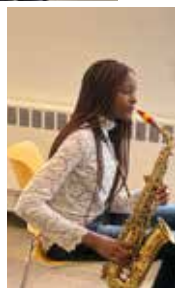
"BackCountry Jazz has been an extraordinary force shaping the trajectory of my journey with music. Their dedication to providing opportunities for growth and development has immensely shaped my musical facility."- Peyton



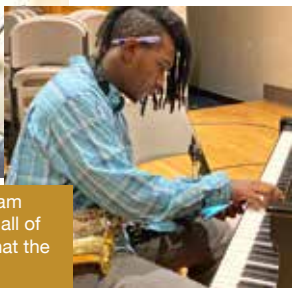
"I have gained a wonderful music education that has not only influenced my decisions on the bandstand but my decisions in life and I am beyond grateful."- Ashley



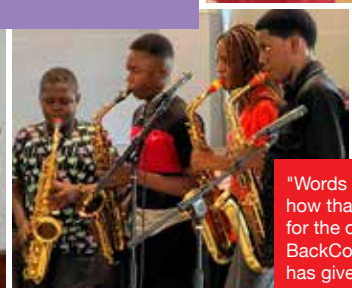
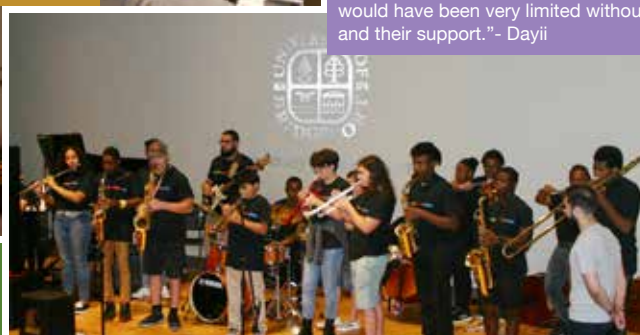
"Throughout the years that I've played in the program, I have come to comprehend music at a much greater level." - Kelvyn



"BackCountry Jazz has been one of the greatest impacts on my life. Through this program I was able to work with musicians that inspire me every day. I have learned so much about music and life through this program."- Deborah

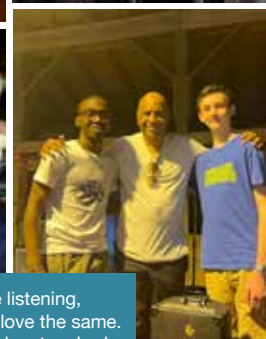
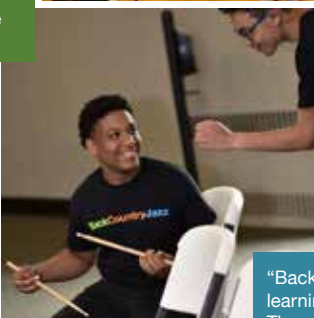


"I believe I wouldn't be the musician or person I am today without the help of BackCountry Jazz and all of the amazing opportunities and teaching artists that the program provides."- Caleb



"My opportunities to grow and develop as a musician would have been very limited without BackCountry Jazz and their support."- Dayi

"I would've never discovered or believed in my musical capabilities without the support and guidance of the incredible musicians I've been able to work with through BCJazz. They have influenced my musical journey and inspired me to keep pursuing music."- Sandra



"Words can't explain how thankful I am for the opportunities BackCountry Jazz has given me. I began attending BCJazz programs in the 4th grade, and experiencing that first day truly impacted me. Being mentored by BCJazz for over 10 years strengthened my connection to this music. I now attend Manhattan School of Music on full scholarship." - Vinton

"BackCountry Jazz means the world to me. I love listening, learning, and playing music amongst others who love the same. The education and family I have discovered there has touched my music and my life."- Kevin

Photography by Joshua Silverman Photography and FixYourTech

BackCountryJazz