

The Transformative Effects of Education

How my educational experience at the BGJI has affected me as a musician and educator, and inspired me to become more socially active

Alex Johnson

Inspiration for Compositions

- Danilo Perez Performance Labs
- Music and Social Activism Class
- Lessons and forums with faculty/guest artists

"In Commons"

- "In Commons"- written while relaxing, walking around and exploring Boston Common park.
- American Robin bird call=Tenor sax motif



T. Sax. 1

T. Sax. 2

A musical score for two Tenor Saxophones (T. Sax. 1 and T. Sax. 2) in G major. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first measure of each staff is marked with a '5' above the staff, indicating a fifth finger fingering. The melody consists of eighth notes and quarter notes, with a final note in each staff being a dotted quarter note. The two staves play in unison.

“In Commons”

- First section simulates intersection of Boston Common and traffic and commotion just outside the park.
- Second section represents natural beauty of the park/ nature with the minimal human interference.
- Free section represents serenity when everything is quiet for a moment.



“In Commons”

- Malwina Masternak-Vocals
- Luke Norris-Tenor Saxophone
- Alex Johnson-Tenor Saxophone
- Grzegorz Wlodarczyk-Bass
- Jose Arturo Soto Gamboa-Piano
- Jodie Michael-Drums



"Prayer for Poway"

- Written in response to shooting in my hometown of Poway, CA.
- Inspired to write tune from Social Activism class.
- Mixed feelings in the piece of paying tribute to those affected, but also frustration over gun violence that keeps happening (last chord very dissonant).

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Prayer for Poway". It consists of two staves of music in a key signature of three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor). The first staff begins at measure 4 and contains four measures with the following chords: D^bMa7, A^b/C, D^bMa7, and C7(#9#5). The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the first measure. The second staff begins at measure 8 and contains seven measures with the following chords: D^bMa7, Fmi7, A Ma7, E Ma7, D^bMa7, and a first ending (1.) leading to a second ending (2.) with the chord C Ma7(b9#9#11). The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Prayer for Poway

- Malwina Masternak-Vocals
- Alex Johnson-Tenor Saxophone
- Grzegorz Wlodarczyk-Bass
- Jose Arturo Soto Gamboa-Piano
- Jodie Michael-Drums



Goal after graduating from BGJI: Creating my own non-profit music organization: “The Norwalk Jazz All Stars”

- Mission: To expose middle school band students in Los Angeles (Norwalk/La Mirada) school districts to jazz through free private lessons with professional musicians, playing in a jazz ensemble, and having performance opportunities in the community and area.

Inspiration for the project

- Danilo Perez Foundation
- Marco Pignataro's Pedagogy class
- Music and Social Activism Class
- The Harmony Project, Mission: Growth, Community, Connection
- The Jazz Angels

Why this is important

- Most of the students come from low income backgrounds and can't afford private lessons.
- 5 of the 6 middle school music programs in Norwalk/La Mirada don't have jazz bands or jazz combos at all, no jazz education.
- Give students more opportunities to perform (not just the usual 3 or 4 concerts per school year)

Vision

- 1st year- Create one ensemble/big band of 30 students from around Norwalk/La Mirada
- Each student gets a half hour private lesson a week with professional musician
- Program runs the entire school year (September-June)

Vision: Year 1

- Students get at least once a month opportunities to perform gigs at venues outside of school.
- Students get the opportunity to go a recording studio and record an album.
- At the end of year, have a big fundraiser celebration concert to thank the donors and receive donations for the next year. Invite professional bands to perform, students sit in with the pros.

Artet

- Inspired from a Danilo Performance Lab discussing tetrachords.
- Chord progression of the song is built on roots of the notes of the tetrachord
- Ab minor tetrachord (Ab Bb Cb Db), progression= Bbmi7, AbMa7, Dbmi7, Bmi7
- D major tetrachord (D E F# G), progression= F#mi7, GMa7, EMa7, DMa7(#11)

The image displays two staves of musical notation in treble clef, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first staff, starting at measure 10, features a sequence of chords: Bbmi7, AbMa7, C#mi7, and Bmi7. The second staff, starting at measure 14, features a sequence of chords: F#mi7, GMa7, EMa7, and DMa7(#11). The notation includes various note values, accidentals, and phrasing slurs.

Artet

- Alex Johnson-Tenor Saxophone
- Grzegorz Wlodarczyk-Bass
- Agnieszka Derlak-Piano
- Jodie Michael-Drums



Like Someone in Love (Zero Gravity)

- “Like Someone in Love” composed by Jimmy Van Heusen, Zero Gravity style
- I wanted to explore the change in my playing with being “more comfortable with being uncomfortable”.

Like Someone in Love (Zero Gravity)

- Alex Johnson-Tenor Saxophone
- Grzegorz Wlodarczyk-Bass
- Agnieszka Derlak-Piano
- Jodie Michael-Drums



Bibliography

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Thank You!

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