

Thursday, December 1, 2022

RE: Letter of Support for Richard K Spencer and the New School of Music

Dear Richard,

This is a letter of support for your work and programs at the New School of Music, specifically the Texas Jazz and Blues Camp, including its outreach clinics at schools before the summer camp occurs.

I have thoroughly enjoyed watching the students learn about the history and performance of jazz with the staff you have put together. The looks on the students' faces when Don Braden, Andre Hayward, Red Young, Murali Coryell, Tom Brechtlein, or Ernie Durawa are performing during the camp or at the schools pretty much says it all! They are world class artists and always bring a special level of performance to the camp and clinics.

Beginning in May of 2017, you brought Don Braden in to provide clinics with my high school jazz band in preparation for a performance at Antone's with Don as a special guest. It was a real treat to see the kids perform in a real-world venue with him! That's one of my favorite memories of teaching!

Your consistent work behind the scenes to provide funding and direction means so much for students, parents, and band directors. The level of organization and direction at your camp is top-notch. The camp is engaging and provides kids a place to meet other kids who like playing their instruments, no matter their current level of experience with jazz. The kids start off the week immediately learning new songs in their small groups, taught by professional artists-educators from Austin and beyond. One of the things I most appreciate about the camp is how it focuses on building a safe-to-fail environment with emphasis on teamwork and support. When kids are taught that failing is a natural part of the learning process they are willing to take risks and therefore end up with an enduring understanding that can last a lifetime.

Best of luck in the future!

Musically yours,

Ponder East

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