



**1631 4th Avenue North  
Birmingham, Alabama 35203  
Phone(205) 254-2731  
Website: [www.jazzhall.com](http://www.jazzhall.com)**

July, 18, 2011

From: Ray Reach, Director of Student Jazz Programs, Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame

RE: Fundraising CD benefitting the Jazz Education Program at the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame

Dear Jazz Friends:

Please excuse this form letter, but such a letter is a fast and efficient way to communicate with a large number of people. As some of you may already know, I am compiling a CD to sell to raise money for our jazz education program at the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame.

Since 1999, the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame has offered **free** jazz instruction every Saturday, available to any resident of the State of Alabama, supported by money from the City of Birmingham, and by grants and donations. On any given Saturday, we usually have 75 to 100 students in attendance. Among these students are young people from many diverse socio-economic and ethnic groups. Many of the young students who attend these free classes have no music instruction available to them at all (other than what we offer), because a large number of the schools in the Birmingham area have lost their music teachers due to the current economic decline.

One interesting and easily observable phenomenon is the large number of extraordinarily gifted music students who have come to our program. In fact, one might call many of them "prodigies." Recently, the size of our jazz faculty has shrunk because of lack of funds to pay the teachers. Our financial support from many sources has all but gone away. This is a consequence of far-reaching detrimental effect. Sad but true.

Despite our financial struggles, our program continues to grow and prosper. Each year, our students who graduate high school receive valuable scholarships from top jazz studies programs such as The University of New Orleans, New School University in New York and The University of North Texas. In fact two alumni of our program received top scholarships (The Ellis Marsalis Scholarship) from the University of New Orleans: saxophonist Jeronne Ansari and bassist Sam Albright.

Our **Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame Student All-Star Band** (the **AJHoF Student All-Stars**), ranging in age from 13 to 20 years, performs all over the Birmingham area. On December 19, 2011, the **AJHoF Student All-Stars** appeared as the opening act on a concert with Grammy award winning vocal group, **Take 6**. To say that the **AJHoF All-Stars** were well received would be an understatement – they received a standing ovation! I invite you to go to the **Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame Student All-Star Band** page on Facebook.com, where you can view pictures and videos of this and other performances. Here's the link:

- <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Alabama-Jazz-Hall-of-Fame-Student-All-Star-Band/188042224544763#!/pages/Alabama-Jazz-Hall-of-Fame-Student-All-Star-Band/188042224544763>

In addition to our free Saturday Jazz Classes, we offer many more jazz events, including the monthly “Jazz Jam Fest,” the annual outdoor jazz festival, known as the “Taste of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Festival,” the annual “Student Jazz Band Festival,” and the “Fun With Jazz Educational Program.” All of these events are offered free of charge. You can read about these events on the following websites (next page):

- The Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame Official Website - [www.jazzhall.com](http://www.jazzhall.com)
- The Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame on Wikipedia - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alabama\\_Jazz\\_Hall\\_of\\_Fame](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alabama_Jazz_Hall_of_Fame)
- The Fun With Jazz Program - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fun\\_With\\_Jazz\\_Educational\\_Program](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fun_With_Jazz_Educational_Program)
- Taste of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Festival - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taste\\_of\\_4th\\_Avenue\\_Jazz\\_Festival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taste_of_4th_Avenue_Jazz_Festival)

And so, I am appealing to you, some of America's top music professionals, to help us bolster our sagging revenues, so that we may continue this important work.

First, let me thank those of you who have already agreed to contribute tracks to our fundraising compilation CD: A big “thank you” goes out to:

- Pianist **Ellis Marsalis** (noted jazz educator and father of Wynton, Branford, Delfayeo and Jason),
- **Bill Goodwin** (drummer/producer for Phil Woods)
- Drummer/vibraphonist **Jason Marsalis**
- **Chuck Leavell** (keyboardist with the Allman Brothers, the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, John Mayer and others)
- Saxophonist **Lou Marini** (Buddy Rich Big Band, Blood, Sweat and Tears, Saturday Night Live Band, the Blues Brothers, etc.)

- Trumpeter **Lew Soloff** (Blood, Sweat and Tears, Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, Gil Evans orchestra, etc.)  
Vibraphonist/drummer Chuck Redd (Mel Torme, Charlie Byrd, Bernie Kessel, etc.)
- **Just A Few Cats** (Ruben Studdard's backup band)
- Guitarist **Mundell Lowe** (Andre Previn Trio)
- Drummer Danny Gottlieb (Pat Metheny Group)
- **Overflo**
- Drummer **P J Spraggins**
- Bassist **Cleveland Eaton** (Count Basie, Ramsey Lewis)
- and Guitarist **Ken Navarro**.

(My apologies if I've left anyone out.)

Please consider joining the ranks of the above named musicians by contributing a track to our CD. We hope to get it distributed nationally and earn enough money to do a lot of good for some aspiring jazz players of the future.

If you do decide to contribute to our project, feel free to send us *any* good jazz recording – your choice. Of course, we prefer original compositions that you own clear rights to, so as to avoid copyright restrictions. And feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Straight ahead and strive for tone,



Ray Reach

Director of Student Jazz Programs

Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame

[www.jazzhall.com](http://www.jazzhall.com)

Mobile phone: 205-960-6328

Email: [rreach@bellsouth.net](mailto:rreach@bellsouth.net)

Ray Reach, Bio on Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray\\_Reach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray_Reach)

Ray Reach, Official Website: [www.rayreach.com](http://www.rayreach.com)