

Phillips Exeter Academy Music Department



Tommy Gallant Memorial Jazz Concert

Sunday, April 12, 2026
4:00 PM

“the Bowld”
Forrestal Bowld Music Center
29 Tan Lane
Exeter, NH

PEA Faculty Jazz Ensemble

Marcus Rabb, *trumpet*
Chris Klaxton, *trumpet*
Nick Mainella, *saxophone*
Eric Schultz, *saxophone*
Tim Ray, *piano*
Jacob Hiser, *organ*
Mike Mele, *guitar*
Keala Kaumeheiwa, *bass*
Zach King, *drums*

Program

selections to be announced

Meet the Musicians



Marcus Rabb

Marcus D. Rabb is a seasoned Music Educator and professional musician with over 30 years of experience in education. As an educator, he has held leadership roles such as Director of Fine Arts and Music Director at prestigious institutions in Washington, D.C., Florida, Massachusetts, and the U.S. Virgin Islands where he instituted curriculum, directed various ensembles, taught music courses, and created lasting musical experiences for students.

He has performed with an array of musical legends, including Aretha Franklin, Wynton Marsalis, Nestor Torres and Clark Terry. He holds a Master of Music and Bachelor of Music from Howard University, with a concentration in Jazz Studies and Trumpet. While at Howard he studied piccolo trumpet and received a fellowship to study abroad at the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France. After years of studying European Classical music, Marcus dedicated his musical life to the performance and instruction of Jazz and has performed and taught nationally and internationally.

Currently, he is the Chair of the Phillips Exeter Academy Music Department and serves as the institution's first Director of Jazz and Bands, leading the PEA Band, the Pep Band, PEA Jazz Ensemble, and the Global Rhythm Ensemble.



Keala Kaumeheiwa

Bassist Keala Kaumeheiwa received a Bachelor's of Music Degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a diploma from the Thelonious Monk Institute (now known as the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz Performance).

Keala has performed with the New York String Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, as well as with Jimmy Heath, Jackie McLean, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Wynton Marsalis, Bobby Watson, Harry "Sweets" Edison, James Moody, Betty Carter and Joe Lovano. Since 2001, he has taught Jazz Combo Ensembles at MIT and bass at Phillips Exeter Academy since 2018, as well as freelancing with many groups throughout Boston and New England.



Eric Schultz

Eric Schultz is a musician and educator whose diverse body of work frequently jumps between two opposing worlds: acoustic and electronic, mainstream and experimental, and academic and non-academic.

Trained as a composer, Eric is a producer, saxophone player, technologist, recording engineer, occasional percussionist, and conductor. Eric's academic music has been performed by the San Jose State Wind

Symphony, the Iowa State University Symphony Orchestra, the Missouri Fine Arts Academy Choir, and acclaimed pianist Steven Spooner. Eric is one of the founding members of Crossing 32nd Street, in which he has served as technologist, saxophonist, percussionist, and conductor. For a brief but memorable stretch, Eric was the baritone saxophonist in the Ray Price Country Stampede Orchestra in Branson, Missouri. Eric is the Director of Electronic and Emerging Music at Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire. Eric received his doctorate in composition from Arizona State University, where he studied primarily with Glenn Hackbarth.



Tim Ray

Tim Ray's wide-ranging skills as a soloist and accompanist have afforded him the opportunity to perform with legendary performers from all walks of music. Ray served as music director and pianist for the legendary Tony Bennett from 2016 until the singer's retirement in 2021. Before that, he performed on the road with singer-songwriter Lyle Lovett, touring for more than 15 years. Appearing on over 100 recordings, Ray has performed in concert with an extensive list of pop-

music icons, notably Aretha Franklin, Bonnie Raitt, Jane Siberry, and Soul Asylum. He regularly performs with leading figures in the jazz world, among them Terri Lyne Carrington, Gary Burton, Esperanza Spalding, Kurt Elling, George Garzone, Dave Douglas, Lewis Nash, and Brian Blade, and his classical credits include solo performances and concerts with the Boston Pops, Gunther Schuller, and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. He has released six albums under his own name, including 2020's *Excursions & Adventures* featuring Terri Lyne Carrington and John Patitucci. Ray's busy schedule has included frequent tours throughout North America, South America, Mexico, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, and has included performances at Carnegie Hall, the White House, the Kennedy Center, and the 1992 Presidential Inauguration. He is a grant recipient from the National Endowment for the Arts and continues to be in high demand as a musical director, composer, arranger, private instructor, and clinician.



Mike Mele

Guitarist Mike Mele graduated from Berklee College of Music in 1990 (Cum Laude). Mike is a prominent educator, and has taught guitar lessons through The Music Emporium in Lexington, Massachusetts for over twenty-five years. He has also taught at Berklee College of Music, Tufts University, Sharon Music Academy and Bentley College. He currently teaches guitar at Phillips Exeter Academy.

Mike has spent the last thirty years performing with many jazz and blues greats, including Roy Hargrove, Antonio Hart, Tony Monaco, Bill Pierce, Joe Hunt, Barry Ries, Marty Rowen, Melvin Sparks, Myanna. Mike has been a member of the Ken Clark Organ Trio, and recorded the albums *Eternal Funk* and *Mutual Respect* for the distinguished Severn Records label. Mike was also a long-standing member of Michelle Willson's Evil Gal Festival Orchestra, toured North America and Europe, and released the critically acclaimed album *Wake-Up Call* for Rounder Records.



Nick Mainella

Nick Mainella is a New England based saxophonist and woodwind artist. He completed his Bachelor of Music degree from the University of New Hampshire and his Master of Music degree in jazz performance at Western Michigan University.

After living and working in Boston for a number of years, Nick now calls the Portsmouth, NH area home where he is an in-demand teacher, performer, and clinician. Nick holds positions at the University of New Hampshire, and Phillips Exeter Academy as well as teaching a large private studio of all ages including online students from around the globe.

Nick is also the Creator and Host of the critically acclaimed, 10 Minute Jazz Lesson Podcast where he spreads knowledge of jazz and improvisation to students the world over.

Nick also maintains an active performing career with many ensembles throughout New England and over the years Nick has been lucky enough to study and perform with some of the top musicians in the world including, Clark Terry, James Moody, Branford Marsalis, Donny McCaslin, Jimmy Heath, John Clayton, Ingrid Jensen, and Billy Pierce.

Nick also maintains an active performance schedule in New England and beyond with ensembles such as, The Soggy Po Boys, Sojoy, OurBigBand, and various ensembles under his own name.



Zach King

Drummer Zak King graduated from New England Conservatory of Music in 2017. He currently teaches drum set and percussion at Phillips Exeter Academy. Zak is a chameleon of styles, having performed on Broadway, at Carnegie Hall, at Jazz clubs and festivals, as well as rock and metal tours across North America, Europe, and Asia.



Chris Klaxton

New England native, Chris Klaxton, has developed a reputation as a gifted multi-instrumentalist, an imaginative composer, and an effective educator. With degrees in both classical and jazz trumpet, Klaxton has received a rich and varied education, studying with: Brian Lynch, Terence Blanchard, Jason Carder, Dr. Robert

Stibler, Stephen Guerra, Whit Sidener, and Gary Lindsay.

Perhaps the most significant musical relationship of Klaxton's career is that with famed trumpeter, Clark Terry. Years of study, several years as valet/travel manager, and more than a decade of friendship with Clark, has left Chris saturated with lessons and anecdotes (musical and otherwise). Chris is proud to pass on a repertoire unique to Clark, a system of phrasing and rhythmic pronunciation, and a means of conveyance handed down directly from one of the founding fathers of the music.

As a performer, Klaxton contributes trumpet, keyboards, guitar, and percussion to a variety of projects running the stylistic gamut. His self-led 8-piece ensemble has recorded two albums of original music (STARCODE and COLLAGE) which display Klaxton's eclectic palette, a unique approach to the jazz tradition, and a fertile imagination.

In 2015 Klaxton founded [OURBIGBAND](#), a New England-based large ensemble dedicated to performing new music. The band's 2016 collaboration with famed trumpeter / composer, Dave Douglas, featured a program of Douglas' large ensemble music as well as a premiere of Self Portrait in Four Dimensions (dedicated to Charles Mingus).

Equal to Klaxton's passion for performing is a commitment to education. On faculty at the [University of New Hampshire](#), [Longy School of Music at Bard College](#), and [Portsmouth Music and Arts Center Klaxton](#), Klaxton teaches jazz trumpet, classical trumpet, jazz piano, composition, theory, and coaches ensembles. He is also an in demand clinician, adjudicator, is available for private instruction, and serves as choir director for First Parish Federated Church in South Berwick, Maine.



Jacob Hiser

Jacob Hiser is a versatile pianist who studies and performs a variety of musical traditions. Born and raised in rural Missouri, he grew up playing bluegrass, blues, rock, and classical music, eventually falling in love with jazz as a teenager after discovering a Bill Evans CD in his local library. He studied jazz piano with Kyle Aho at Missouri State University, where he became obsessed with the musical worlds of Thelonious Monk and Ran

Blake. He then moved to Boston to attend New England Conservatory's Contemporary Improvisation program. While at NEC, he studied with Ran Blake, Bruce Brubaker, Joe Morris, and Frank Carlberg, and performed in ensembles and concerts coached/directed by Jason Moran, John Zorn, Tanya Kalmonovitch, Anthony Coleman, and Simon Carrington.

With jazz groups, country bands, choirs, Korean folk/fusion ensembles, and classical cellists, Jacob has performed all over the United States, as well as Canada, France, Germany, Hungary, Australia, and New Zealand. Currently, he is a collaborative pianist at Phillips Exeter Academy and with Boston Children's Chorus. He has released two albums: "Seconds", comprised mostly of original jazz compositions for quintet and trio, and "All sketches wish to be real", a solo piano album of original compositions augmented by electronics.

Remembering Tommy Gallant



Born July 14, 1935, in Exeter, NH, he was the only son of Thomas and Doris Gallant. By the time he was in high school, Tommy played piano with several local Jazz bands. On his own and often with his trombone-playing friend Phil Wilson, Tommy spent many hours learning new tunes and beginning the process of mastering his craft on the piano in his parents' living room.

After high school and his service with the United States Marine Corp, Tommy studied piano and music theory at the University of New Hampshire and the Berklee School of Music in Boston. Settling down in the New Hampshire seacoast, he proceeded to build a life-long career as a performer, a teacher (at UNH, Berklee and Phillips Exeter Academy), and as a dedicated promoter of Jazz. But it was the two decades during which he presided over the Sunday night jazz scene upstairs at The Press Room in Portsmouth for which he is perhaps best remembered on the Seacoast.

The Sunday night jazz tradition began early in The Press Room's history, back in the late '70s, when the musician in charge was another Seacoast jazz legend, namely pianist Larry Garland. But, as Larry tells it, "These kids were coming in from Berklee with charts!" So Larry, being a self-taught player who doesn't read music, had some advice for owner Jay Smith. His advice: "Get Tommy Gallant!"

Larry, of course, went on to establish the Tuesday night jazz tradition downstairs at The Press Room, where for more than 30 years he has led River City Jazz, the host quartet for this popular and influential jam session. And Tommy Gallant continued the Sunday night tradition upstairs until he died in 1998. It was Tommy's bassist, Jim Howe, who took over the trio's leadership at that time. Then, when Jim passed on in 2007, Jim was succeeded by pianist Ryan Parker, who continues as the group's leader to this day.

Tommy Gallant will long be remembered for his commitment to promoting jazz on the Seacoast, for the scope of his musical activities, his personal integrity, enthusiasm, along with his love of humor and his ability to tell a good joke well. At the time of his death, the annual Portsmouth Summer Jazz Festival was renamed in his honor the Tommy Gallant Jazz Festival, the event we celebrate this week in Prescott Park.

Concert Series Information

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