

Middle School Jazz Academy Faculty Bios 2008-09

Claire Daly is a renowned baritone saxophonist - winning the Downbeat Critic's Poll - Rising Star - 6 times. She studied with Joe Viola at Berklee School of Music and has performed worldwide, lives and teaches in New York City and is currently composing music for a tribute to an Alaskan journey made by a relative in the 1930s. Her first CD as a leader, *Swing Low*, is in the William Jefferson Clinton Library in Little Rock, Ark., as a CD significant to Mr. Clinton while he was president and features MSJA Director Eli Yamin.

Tom Dempsey has performed and/or recorded with a virtual "Who's Who" of world renowned jazz musicians including: Jim Hall, John Abercrombie, John Scofield, Tal Farlow, Buddy Montgomery, George Coleman, Kenny Barron, Roy Haynes, Jack McDuff, Bobby McFerrin, Gerald Wilson, Mel Torme, Richard Wyands, Muhal Richard Abrams, and Dave Brubeck. He has recorded four CDs as a leader: *What's Going On* (City Tone Records), *Perspectives* (Imaginary Records), *Blues In The Slope* (Igmod Records), *If Only We Knew* (Self Release). Dempsey has also recorded as a sideman on many recordings.

He has made numerous appearances on New York radio and television including performances on "The Rosie O'Donnell Show," the HBO series "Sex and the City," and WQXR radio. Dempsey has also performed for many Broadway shows including "Bring In 'da Noise, Bring In 'da Funk," "The Lion King," "Aida," "Beauty and the Beast" and "Mama Mia."

In recent years, Dempsey has been teaching at Jazz at Lincoln Center, SUNY New Plats, Rutgers University and as Artistic Director of the Jazz Summit at the National Guitar Workshop. His books "Jazz Eras for Guitar," "Easy Soloing for Jazz Guitar," "Sight-Reading for the Contemporary Guitarist" and "Classic Jazz Styles for Guitar" are available through Alfred Music and Workshop Arts. Dempsey has also recorded over 170 online lessons for WorkshopLive.com covering jazz guitar performance, repertoire development and music theory. Dempsey received his bachelor's degree in jazz studies from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University and earned his master's degree in jazz/commercial music at Manhattan School of Music.

Nabaté Isles, trumpeter/composer/educator, was born and raised in New York City. He received a bachelor's degree from the Eastman School of Music and a master's degree from New York University. Isles has performed and/or recorded with unique artists such as Mos Def, James Newton, Charli Persip, Steve Coleman, Ravi Coltrane, Lonnie Plaxico, Mike Longo, Oliver Lake, Christian McBride, Freda Payne, the Mingus Big Band and the José Limon Dance Company. He has also composed musical scores for six short films and is currently producing a documentary in pre-production on jazz great Lee Morgan, with Lou DiBella, Mos Def, Marc Levin and Sam Pollard. He was awarded a commission for the 2008 Festival of New Trumpet Music in which he composed a suite titled 'We Need Unity in the Community'. Isles also has a weekly TV show on MNN as well called, 'So Much to Talk About.' Isles is an adjunct professor of music technology at Bloomfield College.

Mary Ann McSweeney is a bassist, composer, arranger and clinician who has worked professionally with Dizzy Gillespie, Lee Konitz, Bucky Pizzarelli and recorded with the New York Nonet. She has played around Europe and the U.S. with David Krakouer's Klezmer Madness and singer Audra McDonald. She has released two albums under her own name and recently produced and played on the upcoming release of Mike Fahn Quintets, *East and West*. She has had an adjunct position at New Jersey City University, El Camino College and Harbor College. She currently enjoys teaching at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Middle School Jazz Academy.

LaFrae Sci moved to New York City in 2000 to pursue her music career as a drummer. Since then, Sci has participated in countless workshops both locally and overseas that foster jazz education. She has toured France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Switzerland, among other countries, with noted artists. Before moving to New York City, Sci was the program director for Instrument for Kids, a program sponsored by the Northeast Ohio Jazz Society. Sci graduated with a bachelor's degree in Political Theory and Economics from Oberlin College in Ohio.

Deborah Weisz: From playing in the Sahara Desert, with Roswell Rudd, to touring the world with Frank Sinatra; trombonist/ composer Deborah Weisz's life in music has been filled with diversity. Originally from Chicago, Illinois, Weisz's musical journey has included stops in Phoenix, Las Vegas and New York City, where she has lived since 1993; performing a variety of music work while exploring the post-bop and beyond realms with her own groups. As a bandleader, she has recorded 3 CDs. Her most recent CD - *Trio*, released June 2007, has received critical acclaim. As a composer, she has received grants/commissions from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Afrikan Amerikan Jazz Orchestra, Middle School Jazz Academy (JALC), Julius Hemphill Jazz Composition Award competition, New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA)/Meet the Composer and was a Prize/Finalist for the BMI Foundation/Charlie Parker Composition Award. Along the way Weisz has also worked as an educator; giving back and sharing her love of music with students. She teaches out of her private studio in New York City, is active in teaching artist work and has recently become a member of the jazz faculty at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, Connecticut.

Eli Yamin is Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center's Middle School Jazz Academy and Artistic Director of The Jazz Drama Program. He is a jazz pianist, composer, educator, broadcaster, bandleader and Steinway artist. Yamin's joyful, imaginative and swinging piano playing has led him to perform at top concert halls and festivals in the United States, Europe, Mali, China, Japan and India, where he recently lead a 3-week tour with his quartet in collaboration with top Indian artists and sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. As a leading educator and professional jazz advocate passionately committed to expanding the jazz audience, Yamin teaches jazz worldwide to business leaders, middle school students, music teachers, college professors and performing artists. He is a consultant for The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad, produced with the U.S. State Department, the National Endowment for the Arts, Fordham University Graduate School of Business and WBGO Radio. Yamin's six jazz musicals for children have been performed for thousands by hundreds of young people. They include "Message From Saturn," about the healing power of the blues and "Nora's Ark," a modern retelling of the biblical tale. He has recorded numerous CD's including *You Can't Buy Swing* (2008) with his own quartet and *Suns of Cosmic Consciousness* (2005) with the group Solar. Yamin has played, recorded and taught with Barry Harris, Illinois Jacquet, Wynton Marsalis, Walter Perkins, Perry Robinson, Kate McGarry, Claire Daly and Bob Stewart. He holds a master's degree in music education from City University of New York and has appeared on CBS Saturday Morning, PBS, Fox News and National Public Radio.

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