

Kansas City Area Youth Jazz

Professional mentorship, performance and recording for the next generation of jazz artists.



Kansas City Area Youth Jazz, Inc. (KCAYJ) provides merit-based, no-cost tuition fellowships for high school and college musicians. Fellows learn alongside professionals in rehearsal, performance and the studio, culminating in a commercially distributed album.

501(C)(3) PUBLIC CHARITY
EIN 92-2098803
KANSAS CITY METRO

NEW PROGRAM

Jazz Journalism Fellowship

Jazz Artistry Now, KCAYJ's digital arts magazine published online since 2007, is launching a Jazz Journalism Fellowship. The program extends KCAYJ's mentorship model from the bandstand to the byline, creating a new path into jazz reporting.

Clinician Rick Hellman

A Kansas City native, longtime journalist and publicist, and founder of the Kansas City Rock History Project. At the KU News Service, he covers music, film and media studies, theatre and visual art.

Eligibility, application dates and fellowship details will be announced by KCAYJ.

2027 FELLOWSHIP CYCLE

Youth Jazz Fellowship Auditions

21

FEBRUARY
2027

Sunday
2:00-8:00 p.m.

Open to high school and college musicians seeking a merit-based, no-cost fellowship.

Current audition format

- One jazz standard
- A blues in F
- All major scales, correctly, in 60 seconds or less
- Candidate interview; iRealPro accompaniment is used

Reserve or inquire: (913) 250-5141
director@youthjazz.us

PROFESSIONAL MENTORSHIP

Clinicians teach inside the work

KCAYJ clinicians and guest artists work alongside fellows, bringing improvisation, ensemble practice, stagecraft and studio etiquette into real-time learning.

Christopher Burnett
Alaadeen Ensemble ·
compositions and
arrangements

Houston Smith
Bill Crain Ensemble · drums

Greg Carroll
Watson Ensemble · piano,
keys and vibraphone

Rev. WM Thornton
Leon A. Brady Vocal
Ensemble · piano and
arrangements

Everett Freeman Jr.
2026 guest clinician · piano
and keyboard

Maurice Butler
2026 guest clinician · drum
set

SUPPORT KCAYJ

Four ways to give

25 for 150: Twenty-five supporters are invited to give \$150. Each receives a limited collector's mug featuring 2026 Fellows album-cover art by Kansas City photographer Duane Hallock.

Gifts support new works, mentorship, masterclasses and recording. Donors may also use **Givebutter**, the **PayPal Giving Fund**, or an employer match through **Benevity**.

[25 for 150 campaign](#) · [Give any amount](#)

ORGANIZATION AT A GLANCE

4 NAMED ENSEMBLE PROGRAMS	8th ALBUM RECORDED IN 2026	2007 JAN FIRST PUBLISHED ONLINE
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Program family: Youth Jazz Fellowship; *Jazz Artistry Now*; Bird Boot Camp + Musical Salute; and Artists Recording Collective. Rehearsals are based at Kansas City Kansas Community College; sessions are recorded at Allegro Recording Studio A.

MEDIA & PROGRAM CONTACT

Kansas City Area Youth Jazz, Inc. · (913) 250-5141
director@youthjazz.us · YouthJazz.us

Sources: [YouthJazz.us](#) · [2026 Fellowship](#) · [Jazz Artistry Now](#)
· [KU News](#) · [Rick Hellman bio](#)