



Saturday, May 1, 2025, 7:30 PM
Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

Jazz Small Groups Z & I

Miles Okazaki, Director Z

Rudresh Mahanthappa, Director I

PROGRAM

Selections from below will be announced from the stage:

"Honeysuckle Rose" - Fats Waller,
arr. Sam Gerhard

"Boplicity" - Miles Davis/Gil Evans

"We See/I Mean You" - Thelonious Monk

"It Could Happen to You" - Van Heusen,
arr. Matt Picoult

"I'm Not So Sure" - Roy Hargrove

"Subconscious-Lee" - Lee Konitz

"Loping" - Miles Davis, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson

"Processional" - Thomas Verrill

"Provinces" - Sonny Rollins

"Unsung" - Woody Shaw

"Yinz" - Woody Shaw

"Innuendo" - Ari Freedman

About the Department of Music

The Department of Music at Princeton University provides its undergraduates—whether they major or minor in Music—the opportunity to learn from a world-renowned faculty of scholars and composers. Performance opportunities include student-led and departmental ensembles like symphony orchestras, multi-genre choruses, jazz, contemporary music, African music, steel band, laptop orchestra, and much more, and students have access to private instrumental and voice lessons from eminent performing artists. The graduate program offers two distinct and prestigious Ph.D. programs in composition or musicology; graduate students receive fully-funded, immersive experiences conducting research, advancing their craft, and collaborating with faculty within Princeton University's inspiring, interdisciplinary campus.

For more information about the Department of Music and other upcoming events, and to sign-up for our mailing list, please visit music.princeton.edu.

PERFORMERS



Small Group Z

Miles Okazaki, Director
Daisy Yao '28, Alto Saxophone
Arnav Vyas '27, Alto Saxophone
Brian J. Karle '28, Trombone
Sam Gerhard '25, Piano
Matthew Picoult '28, Guitar
Evan Callas '27, Bass
Nikhil Kuntipuram '28, Drums

Small Group I

Rudresh Mahanthappa, Director
Theodore Peebles '28, Trumpet
Miles Sastry '26, Alto Saxophone
William Parson '28, Trombone
Alex Levin '27, Piano
Ari Freedman GS, Bass
Alex MacArthur '25, Drums



*The use of photographic, video, or audio equipment is strictly prohibited. Please turn off or mute electronic devices for the duration of the performance. **To learn more about Jazz at Princeton and upcoming events, please visit jazzatprinceton.com and sign-up for our mailing list or email jazz@princeton.edu***

ABOUT

Small Group Z Director Miles Okazaki is a NYC-based guitarist originally from Port Townsend, a small seaside town in Washington State. His approach to the guitar is described by the New York Times as “utterly contemporary, free from the expectations of what it means to play a guitar in a group setting — not just in jazz, but any kind.” His sideman experience over the last two decades covers a broad spectrum, from standards to experimental music (Kenny Barron, John Zorn, Stanley Turrentine, Dan Weiss, Matt Mitchell, Steve Coleman, Jonathan Finlayson, Jane Monheit, Amir ElSaffar, Darcy James Argue, and many others). He has released nine albums of original compositions over the last 12 years on the Sunnyside, Pi, and Cygnus labels. In 2018 Okazaki received wide critical acclaim for his six-album recording of the complete compositions of Thelonious Monk for solo guitar, an unprecedented project that Nate Chinen called “the six-string equivalent of a free solo climb up El Capitan.” That year, Okazaki was voted the #1 rising star guitarist in the Downbeat Magazine critic’s poll. Other projects include a longstanding duo with drummer Dan Weiss, a duo with percussionist Rajna Swaminathan, and a published book, Fundamentals of Guitar, with Mel Bay. He taught guitar and rhythmic theory at the University of Michigan from 2013-22, joined the faculty at Princeton University in 2021, and holds degrees from Harvard University, Manhattan School of Music, and the Juilliard School.

Small Group I & Jazz Program Director Rudresh Mahanthappa: Hailed by Pitchfork as “jaw-dropping... one of the finest saxophonists going,” alto saxophonist, composer, and educator Rudresh Mahanthappa is widely known as one of the premier voices in jazz of the 21st century. He has over a dozen albums to his credit, including the acclaimed Bird Calls, which topped many critics’ best-of-year lists for 2015 and was hailed by PopMatters as “complex, rhythmically vital, free in spirit while still criss-crossed with mutating structures.” His most recent release, Hero Trio, was considered to be one of the best jazz albums of 2020 by critics and fans alike. Rudresh has been named alto saxophonist of the year for nine of the last eleven years running in Downbeat Magazine’s International Critics’ Polls (2011-2013, 2015-2018, 2020-1), and for five consecutive years by the Jazz Journalists’ Association (2009-2013) and again in 2016. He won alto saxophonist of the year in the 2015-2018 & 2020 JazzTimes Magazine Critics’ Polls and was named the Village Voice’s “Best Jazz Artist” in 2015. He has also received the Guggenheim Fellowship and the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, among other honors.

Mahanthappa is a Yamaha artist and uses Vandoren reeds exclusively.

CELEBRATING OUR SENIORS AND PHDS

Sam Gerhard is a Senior majoring in Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE), with a minor in Computer Science and a certificate in Jazz Studies. An avid Jazz aficionado, Sam began studying piano at the age of six and clarinet at the age of ten. While he doesn't like to pick favorites, Sam has to confess that his two idols of the keyboard are Bill Evans and Oscar Peterson. Sam will be staying at Princeton for another year to complete a Master's of Engineering in ECE and continue working on modifying the antique player piano that served as the basis of his Senior Thesis.

Alex MacArthur is a graduating senior from Newton, MA, majoring in history. On campus, he plays the drums and is the president of the Human Values Forum. He will likely pursue graduate studies abroad next year

Ari Freedman is a graduate student in the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology department. He started playing jazz bass at 11, and has played in jazz small groups, Creative Large Ensemble, and the Sinfonia on cello during his time in Princeton. Next year he will be moving to Burlington, Vermont to pursue a postdoc at UVM.

JAZZ AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY serves to promote this uniquely American music as a contemporary and relevant art form. Its goals are to convey the vast musical and social history of jazz, establish a strong theoretical and stylistic foundation with regard to improvisation and composition, and emphasize the development of individual expression and creativity. Offerings of this program include academic coursework, performing ensembles, master classes, private study, and independent projects. Jazz at Princeton University thanks you for joining them on this evening's journey of beauty, exploration, discovery, and hope.