



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Summer 2002 - Since 1996, the VJF has been organizing the Vail Jazz Workshop (VJW) in conjunction with the annual Vail Jazz Festival in order to assist in the development of the next generation of jazz musicians. As noted above **Brandon Owens** is the first alumnus to return to Vail to perform as a professional. Most of the VJW alumni are in various phases of their college careers preparing to make their mark on the jazz world and we expect to see more of them performing in Vail in the future. Here is what some of them having been doing since leaving Vail:

Hitomi Oba, tenor, **Greg Swiller**, bass, and **Joe Sanders**, bass, all VJW 2001, left Vail returning to their respective high schools and were reunited in February 2002 after being selected to the Grammy High School All-Star Big Band and Jazz Combo. Competition for these ensembles is extremely fierce with high school students from throughout the country auditioning for the opportunity to play in Los Angeles as part of the Grammy Awards, including a weeklong series of gigs in Southern California. They have continued the tradition of alumni who have left Vail and were fortunate enough to receive this high honor while still in high school.

Here is what Joe Sander's high school music director, Cliff Gribble, had to say about the VJW: "Simply put, the combination of the Vail Jazz Workshop and the Jazz Weekend is far and away the best jazz education experience I have encountered in thirty years as a jazz educator. The opportunity for the twelve students in the Workshop to spend a week of fourteen hour days working with John Clayton and his fellow guest artists as well as students of their own caliber is incomparable." **Miles Mosley**, bass, VJW 1996, was the youngest student to ever attend the VJW (15) and is now at UCLA. He won numerous awards after leaving Vail, including the Spotlight Award from the Los Angeles Music Center in 1998, the Dolo Cocker Competition in 1999 and the Shelly Mann "Best Up-and-Coming Artist of the Year" in 1999. He has been "doing a lot of studio work" while attending college and has played with some of the jazz giants including Herbie Hancock at the Duke Ellington Centennial Concert at Royce Hall. Recently, he was joined by two other student musicians at Catalina Bar & Grill in Hollywood as part of the Young Artist Jazz Series. Don Heckman, the jazz critic for the Los Angeles Times reviewed the performance and had this to say about the trio "*...their performance was at a stunningly high professional level--enhanced by the enthusiastic feeling of exhilaration in everything they played. No wonder the packed-house crowd gave the trio a standing ovation, demanding and receiving a spirited encore. ...Mosley was a technical wizard, enhancing his virtuosity with a buoyant sense of swing and a witty sense of humor.*"

The Juilliard Institute for Jazz Studies is a tuition-free (with up to a \$5,000 stipend for each student), pre-professional, two-year program that is limited to 18 advanced jazz musicians by audition. With a faculty composed of some of the greatest teachers (including the VJF's Terrell Stafford) in both the jazz and classical worlds, it is one of the most sought after post-high school jazz educational programs in the world. The VJF is extremely proud that four VJW alumni were selected last year to this extraordinary program:

Erica vonKleist, alto saxophone, VJW 1999, earned honors as Down Beat Magazine's Student Music Award winner in both 1999 and 2000 including "Best Composition," "Best Arrangement," and "Outstanding Soloist." While in high school she was selected to the Grammy High School All-Star Band.

Brandon Lee, trumpet, VJW 2000, recently was awarded the 24th Annual Student Music Award sponsored by Down Beat Magazine and was the 2001 Clifford Brown & Stan Getz Fellowship Award winner as well as the 2001 Bob Ostrum Jazz Scholarship Award. Brandon was selected by Wynton Marsalis to perform with him and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra in a tribute to Louis Armstrong that was televised nationally.

Jumaane Smith, trumpet, VJW 1999, has made many appearances at famous jazz festivals throughout the world, including the Montreux Jazz Festival, the North Sea Jazz Festival, and the Montreal Jazz

Festival. He has had the opportunity to work with some of the major names in jazz including Jimmy Owens, Cecil Bridgewater, Andrew Cyrille, and George Garzone.

Matt Brewer, bass, VJW 2000, was a member of the Grammy High School Jazz Combo and was a featured performer at the 43rd Annual Grammy telecast. He has played with Dan Gottlieb, Clark Terry, Slide Hampton, and Bobby Watson, among others. In addition to his performances with Juilliard, Matt has been playing a lot in a trio with 1999 VJW alumnus, drummer **Obed Calvaire**, a student at Manhattan School of Music, and they recently performed at the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival, as well as recently releasing a new CD on Keynote Records entitled "Shadows". Matt and Obed are joined, on one track, by trumpeter **Ambrose Akimusic**, VJW 2000. Matt reports that "...It seems like everywhere I go I end up playing with someone who was in the Vail Jazz program whether it be a jam session or just a rehearsal at school. It's great!"

Milton Fletcher, piano, VJW 2000, is attending Berklee College of Music in Boston and has played a number of live performances on Boston's WGBH-FM as well playing gigs at a number of famous venues including the QE2 Jazz Cruise and the famed Blue Note in New York. Both he and James E. Williams, drums, VJW 2001, won the prestigious Jimmy Lyons Memorial Scholarship from the Monterey Jazz Festival and are attending Berklee on full scholarships. Milton and James regularly play in a quartet that Milton fronts.

Also attending Berklee is **Christian Scott**, trumpet, VJW 2001, a native of New Orleans has been playing a lot of gigs and recently took the opportunity to return home to play a gig at the famous Snug Harbour jazz club, which was broadcast live in New Orleans.

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