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# Using the Colorado Conservatory for the Jazz Arts as a Model for Jazz Education

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USING THE COLORADO CONSERVATORY FOR THE  
JAZZ ARTS AS A MODEL FOR JAZZ EDUCATION

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B.M. University of Northern Colorado, 2014

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Colorado, Boulder in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree Master's in Jazz Performance and Pedagogy

Department of Music

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This thesis, titled:  
Using the Colorado Conservatory for the Jazz Arts as a Model for Jazz Education  
written by Jonathan Zimny  
has been approved for the Department of Music

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Dr. John Gunther

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Paul McKee

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The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above-mentioned discipline.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a detailed look into the Colorado Conservatory for the Jazz Arts (CCJA) and why it is not only a valid form of jazz education, but one of the best. CCJA is a not-for-profit organization that was founded by Paul and Chris Romaine. The program is dedicated to teaching jazz to middle school and high school level students through small groups or combos. Each group is taught by a professional musician in the Denver Metro area. This paper examines CCJA's place in the history of jazz education and considers other programs similar to CCJA. One-on-one interviews were conducted with the founders, faculty, administration, alumni, and current students along with an anonymous online survey sent out to the CCJA mailing list. From these interviews and survey questions, a history of CCJA was compiled and the innovations, pedagogical techniques, and the community it has created are discussed. Problems that the organization has faced and the future of CCJA are also considered.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page #
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. A BRIEF HISTORY OF JAZZ EDUCATION.....	3
III. WHAT IS CCJA?.....	11
IV. THE HISTORY OF CCJA.....	17
V. THE PEDAGOGY.....	24
VI. THE CCJA COMMUNITY.....	26
VII. INNOVATIONS.....	31
VIII. LESSONS LEARNED.....	35
IX. OTHER JAZZ EDUCATION PROGRAMS.....	39
X. THE FUTURE OF CCJA.....	43
XI. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	46
XII. OUR GRATITUDE.....	50

## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

What is the Colorado Conservatory for the Jazz Arts? When asking the Romaine family, Erienne Romaine, daughter of founders Paul and Chris Romaine, said “that is like asking ‘what is the meaning of life?’”<sup>1</sup> The Colorado Conservatory for the Jazz Arts, or CCJA, is a truly unique and effective educational organization and, for many, has helped them find meaning and community in their lives.

Students who are interested in studying jazz are most often exposed to it through their middle school or high school jazz big band. If they are serious about it, they can attend summer camps, after-school programs, and jazz festivals to learn more than what they get in school. However, students do not always have access to these experiences. After high school, if students want to pursue jazz further, they can attend a college with a jazz program and study to become more advanced in the jazz idiom. Today, most schools outside of higher education only teach jazz through big bands and some do not even have that. Kids at this level who are inspired by jazz need a place to go to learn it in a more thorough and in-depth way. Because of this, there is a great need for good jazz education programs at the middle school and high school levels. The Colorado Conservatory for the Jazz Arts is such an organization, serving over 2,000 students in the greater Denver Metro area since 1999. It is an outstanding model for jazz education because of its organizational structure and pedagogical techniques, devoted founders, connection to the jazz community in Colorado, and its constant innovation. In order to understand the impact and

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<sup>1</sup> Romaine, Chris and Paul, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

importance of CCJA in the modern day, however, we must first understand the history of jazz education and one of its pioneers, Stan Kenton.

## Chapter II

### A Brief History of Jazz Education

Jazz is one of the greatest inventions to ever come out of America. It produced cultural icons, has influenced every popular form of music since its creation, and provided a path to expression unlike any other art form. Jazz has gone through many changes, from the New Orleans style and Ragtime to Swing and Bebop. However, it has always been learned the same way: by playing it. Many jazz musicians up through the 1940s had no access to formal musical training. They learned simply by listening to and learning from other musicians and trying to play what they heard.<sup>2</sup> The main way that musicians learned the music was through jam sessions. A group of musicians congregated either in someone's home or a jazz club and played the popular music and tunes of that time. Young hopefuls sat in and tried their best to play along with these tunes and if they made the changes or played lines that sounded good, they could stay and play some more. If they were not making the changes and were not ready to play, they were ridiculed, shamed, or even laughed off of the bandstand. Those musicians either went home to figure out how to play the tunes, or they quit. This process weeded out the people who were not ready to become jazz musicians and challenged the people who were.<sup>3</sup> In the 1940's, there were no university jazz programs in the nation. To understand the evolution of jazz education, we must also understand Stan Kenton and his influence. There are many other prominent figures in the history of jazz education, including Major N. Clark Smith and Captain Walter Dyett, who

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<sup>2</sup> Alex W. Rodriguez, "A Brief History of Jazz Education, Pt. 1" *A Blog Supreme* (blog), NPR Jazz, November 12, 2012 <http://www.npr.org/sections/ablogsupreme/2012/10/26/163741653/a-brief-history-of-jazz-education-pt-1>.

<sup>3</sup> Scott DeVeaux and Gary Giddins, *Jazz* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), 111-283.

was renowned for teaching at DuSable High School in Chicago.<sup>4</sup> However, for the scope of this paper, Stan Kenton will be the main focus as it was his contributions that led to the modern jazz education format, for better or worse.

Stan Kenton was born in Wichita, Kansas on December 15, 1911. When his career first started, he ended up playing piano in Manny Stand's Orchestra which provided good money and security but had little in the way of creativity. In order to fill this void, Kenton formed his own rehearsal band to play charts he and others had written. In 1941, after gaining some notoriety, the band landed a spot playing the Rendezvous Ballroom, a prestigious club in Los Angeles.

Kenton's fame grew from there and he and his band became widely popular.<sup>5</sup> In 1959, Stan Kenton created the "Kenton Clinics." These were camps that provided students with a chance to learn from and play with important jazz musicians and educators and study with the members of Kenton's band, some of the best musicians of the time. These camps started at Indiana University and grew in size and scope each year.<sup>6</sup> Because of his band and the camps he created, Stan Kenton became an important influence on the course of modern jazz education. Through innovations in his music, touring band, and invention of the "Kenton Clinics," Kenton brought jazz to the young musicians of the next generation. After this increased interest in jazz, universities began to offer degrees in jazz studies, which led to jazz music finding a new home in academia.

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<sup>4</sup> Grossman, Ron. "How Capt. Dyett Turned DuSable's Young Musicians into Stars." *Chicago Tribune*. Accessed May 6, 2018. <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-captain-dyett-dusable-musicians-black-history-flashback-perspec-0219-md-20170215-story.html>

<sup>5</sup> Michael Sparke, *Stan Kenton: This Is an Orchestra!* 1-5, (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2010), 1-5.

<sup>6</sup> Alex W. Rodriguez, "A Brief History of Jazz Education, Pt. 1" *A Blog Supreme* (blog), NPR Jazz, November 12, 2012 <http://www.npr.org/sections/ablogsupreme/2012/10/26/163741653/a-brief-history-of-jazz-education-pt-1>.

Jazz music before World War II was considered to be the opposite of art music; most of this had to do with it being a mostly African American art. Any jazz music performed in high schools or colleges was not given for credit and was thought to be inferior to other types of music, like classical. In fact, the music was not even referred to as jazz; the groups were called dance bands or lab bands. Institutions did this to distance themselves from jazz and the negative connotations it carried within academia.<sup>7</sup> After World War II, sentiments toward jazz began to change. Publishers began to offer arrangements for school jazz bands and popular music groups; school bands no longer had to play old commercial arrangements. A standard body of repertoire began to emerge and with it a standard instrumentation for jazz ensembles.<sup>8</sup> Part of this was helmed by Kenton himself. In 1962, Kenton gave his entire library of work to the University of North Texas library.<sup>9</sup> Once his entire library was available for free, many high school and college dance bands were able to play his unique and modern music. This made Kenton and his music wildly popular among young musicians.

Seeing where jazz was headed, Kenton thought that the future professionals of the music industry needed a place to learn all of the varied techniques that would be required of them. There was simply nowhere for them to learn both classical and jazz techniques.<sup>10</sup> Kenton described his approach to jazz education thus.

If we are to rely on the teenage musician as the artist of the future, he must be trained properly, carefully, and patiently. Consequently, it has been essential that some type of academic program be created to allow him to receive the professional instruction he

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<sup>7</sup> Brad Goode, "Jazz Education," Lecture at University of Colorado, Boulder, April 4, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Michael L. Mark, "The Acceptance of Jazz in the Music Education Curriculum: A Model for Interpreting a Historical Process." *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 92 (1987): 15-21.

<sup>9</sup> "UNT College of Music acquires Maynard Ferguson Music Library," *UNT NEWS*, August 20, 2008. <https://news.unt.edu/news-releases/unt-college-music-acquires-maynard-ferguson-music-library>.

<sup>10</sup> Terry Vosbein, "Artistry in Jazz Education," All Things Kenton. 2016, Accessed October 14, 2016. [http://allthingskenton.com/table\\_of\\_contents/articles/jazz\\_education/](http://allthingskenton.com/table_of_contents/articles/jazz_education/).

deserves. Or to put it this way: because the music has become so complex and involved, with a myriad of tonal and atonal sequences, radical time changes and such, it is imperative that young musicians know why we do what we do, what techniques we employ, what methods we use to shade and dramatize sound, why we continually change instrumentation and experiment with instruments to get coloration patterns heretofore neglected.<sup>11</sup>

Because of this gap in jazz education, Stan Kenton created the “Kenton Clinics,” as they would come to be called. Kenton wanted a place where students could learn right from the source.

In 1959, Stan Kenton hosted the first of his clinics at Indiana University, one of the few colleges that offered a degree in jazz. These clinics sparked a national trend: the summer jazz camp.<sup>12</sup> The “Kenton Clinics” were one-to-two-week camps where students studied and played with a faculty of nationally recognized jazz musicians, educators, and the members of Kenton’s big band. Students began their camp by listening to an evening concert put on by the Kenton band. They auditioned the next morning to be placed into various big bands that were each conducted by an artist in residence.<sup>13</sup> Dr. William Lee, described the format of the camps in his book about Kenton.

A typical week for the clinics included rehearsals and classes in the morning. For an hour before and after lunch, the students participated in a workshop conducted by faculty members. Later in the afternoon, they attended an hour-long lecture conducted either by

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<sup>11</sup> William F. Lee, *Stan Kenton: Artistry in Rhythm*, 238, (Los Angeles: Creative Press of Los Angeles, 1980), 238.

<sup>12</sup> Alex W. Rodriguez, “A Brief History of Jazz Education, Pt. 2” *A Blog Supreme* (blog), NPR Jazz. January 8, 2013, <http://www.npr.org/sections/ablogsupreme/2013/01/08/168893316/a-brief-history-of-jazz-education-pt-2>

<sup>13</sup> Terry Vosbein, "Artistry in Jazz Education," All Things Kenton. 2016, Accessed October 14, 2016. [http://allthingskenton.com/table\\_of\\_contents/articles/jazz\\_education/](http://allthingskenton.com/table_of_contents/articles/jazz_education/).

Kenton or by one of the instructors. On Friday nights a band made up of faculty members played music composed and arranged by students in the arranging class.<sup>14</sup>

The week ended with performances from each band for the parents of the students. This format of playing with and learning from some of the greatest names in jazz education at the time created a spark that affected students in a profound way. Kenton expert Terry Vosbein wrote that “not a single person who spent a week in [that] magical musical place went home untouched.”<sup>15</sup> Kenton put on more and more weeklong clinics each year doing as many as seven in 1977. He also put on upwards of 150 one-day clinics at high schools and colleges while on tour with his band.<sup>16</sup> The success of the countless clinics and camps that Kenton organized had a massive impact on the jazz community and greatly influenced the way jazz was taught and learned.

After World War II, the GI bill “provided veterans with the opportunity to continue their education in music.”<sup>17</sup> Many of the service band musicians took advantage of this and went into higher education. Many of them were interested in jazz. The few universities that foresaw this surge in interest created programs for training in jazz. Some of these universities included the University of North Texas (then called North Texas State University), Berklee College of Music, and the University of Miami (formerly Miami State University).<sup>18</sup> During this time, the jazz era and the popularity of swing and big bands had greatly diminished. Rock music had taken over as America’s most popular form of music and jazz began to move closer to art music.<sup>19</sup> Daniel Murphy, author of “Jazz Studies in American Schools and Colleges: A Brief History,” says that “[Jazz] music [became] more subtle and sophisticated, drawing inspiration and musical content

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<sup>14</sup> Lee, *Stan Kenton*, 237.

<sup>15</sup> Vosbein, “Artistry in Jazz Education.”

<sup>16</sup> Dana Davis, “Clinics: Jazz: Stan Kenton Speaks,” *The Instrumentalist* 30, no. 10 (May 1, 1976): 73.

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Murphy, “Jazz Studies in American Schools and Colleges: A Brief History,” *Jazz Educators Journal*, no. 26 (1994): 35.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-36.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

from an expanded palette of rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic resources.”<sup>20</sup> Kenton and his fellow contemporaries were the musicians that were embracing this change and creating music that was unlike what had come before. With this change in status from pop music to art music, jazz musicians were required to learn different skills. As stated before, Kenton wanted a place for young musicians to learn such skills. Students needed teachers who could eloquently explain things to them and help them navigate through this new form of jazz. In his article in the *Bulletin for Research in Music Education*, Bill Dobbins wrote that “a veteran performer can often communicate a great deal simply by playing,”<sup>21</sup> but often a young student needs more than that. Dobbins said that “probably the single most important task for the musicians dealing with this new environment is the development of verbal skills which are capable of communicating the mechanics and aesthetics of an essentially aural musical tradition.”<sup>22</sup> This is part of why the “Kenton Clinics” were so popular; they provided students with good teachers. Coming into a genre of music as vast and complicated as jazz can be intimidating, but with guidance from some of the best jazz educators, it can be less daunting. The clinics supported and encouraged the transition of jazz into art music and helped spread this sentiment throughout the nation. They were a stepping stone between the jam session format and the academic jazz we have today. Kenton combined the community feeling of a jam session with the safe and non-judgmental feeling of school. People liked this format, and it worked. Many amazing jazz musicians attended or taught at these camps. Even one of CU’s own, Paul McKee, attended in 1974 and 1975.<sup>23</sup> By 1960, there was a surge of growth in jazz on high school and college campuses. “A

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Bill Dobbins, "Jazz and Academia: Street Music in the Ivory Tower," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 96 (1988): 37.

<http://www.jstor.org/colorado.idm.oclc.org/stable/40318208>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Paul McKee, “An Interview with Trombonist/Composer Paul McKee,” *Wilkstone*, 1993.

<http://www.wilkstone.com/?p=1098>.

total of approximately 30 college ensembles in 1960 grew to over 450 by 1970.”<sup>24</sup> Kenton’s clinics and camps inspired students to dive into jazz and pursue it as a career. Some of the students who attended the camps even ended up in Kenton’s band.<sup>25</sup> This mixture of school and jam session was one of Kenton’s greatest innovations. Teachers gave lectures and lessons where students could ask questions and receive answers. Almost every single clinic and camp was held on a high school or college campus. That meant the faculty and administration of the universities and high schools saw the great numbers of students attending and the success Kenton had teaching jazz. As the “Kenton Clinics” gained popularity and jazz shifted into art music, the stigma it carried in academia diminished. More and more universities added jazz ensembles and jazz degrees.

Today, most universities and many junior colleges have jazz ensembles, classes, and jazz degrees.<sup>26</sup> Like most other degrees, students do not need any prior experience in the field as long as they have a willingness to learn. Most jazz degrees include classes in jazz theory, jazz history, improvisation, jazz arranging, and jazz piano. Students are also required to take jazz lessons, usually with a teacher who plays the same instrument, and participate in a big band and jazz combo. Students learn the technical aspects of jazz in their classes and lessons and apply them in their ensembles. This is a thorough and complete system that teaches the fundamentals of jazz music and gets the student technically ready to create music. However, where are kids supposed to go to learn all that they can when they are in high school or middle school?

Looking forward, jazz is ever growing in higher education. Jazz education is still relatively new, and educators are constantly learning better ways of teaching, but by the time

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<sup>24</sup> Murphy, *Jazz Studies*, 37.

<sup>25</sup> Davis, *Clinics*.

<sup>26</sup> Lewis Porter, "Jazz in American Education Today," *College Music Symposium* 29 (1889): 135-36.  
<http://www.jstor.org/colorado.idm.oclc.org/stable/40373955>.

most students are able to really dive into studying jazz in college, they have lost valuable time crucial to their development as a musician and as a person. Most of the jazz education today is taught at the college level. At the middle school and high school levels, students are, for the most part, only exposed to jazz in their school's big bands where the focus is on a tight ensemble sound and not on educating students about how jazz works or how to improvise. There is really still only one way to learn how to play, and that is to go out and play. In a day and age where jazz education is mostly taught through big bands and at the college level, there is one organization that has created something unique.

### CHAPTER III

#### WHAT IS CCJA?

The Colorado Conservatory for the Jazz Arts is an after school not-for-profit program that teaches students at the middle school and high school levels to play jazz in an authentic yet welcoming environment. The conservatory, known by locals as CCJA, is located in the Denver Metro area in Colorado. The program's goal is to

“[advance] and [preserve] America's treasured art form of jazz through helping to enlighten the public about the scope, history, and future possibilities of jazz. All of [their] programs are directed by accomplished professional jazz musicians who continue to pass on their extensive knowledge, experience, and wisdom to the next generation. Whether students go on to play professionally or for enjoyment, their lives are enriched by their participation in CCJA's programs and they develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the art form, carrying this appreciation on into their adult lives. CCJA gives young musicians life changing experiences, mentored by authentic professional jazz musicians, who help them reach whatever level of mastery they desire while feeling connected and supported as they explore their artistic selves.”<sup>27</sup>

Most band directors today have no experience with jazz at all. They are asked to do so much so often, but usually they do not know the right way to go about teaching jazz. As a result, most kids only experience jazz through their school big band, which is only a part of what jazz is. Kids may learn how to play their part in the band and play the music in a jazz style, but most of the

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<sup>27</sup> “CCJA's Mission,” Colorado Conservatory for the Jazz Arts, Accessed March 18, 2018, <https://jazzarts.org/ccjas-mission/>

time, they are not getting much help with improvisation or jazz theory. They may not even be listening to jazz outside of school. Founder Paul Romaine says, “that is an important gap that we were trying to go in and fill.”<sup>28</sup> The existence of CCJA actually helps the band directors as well. Brad Goode explains that “some of the kids who have been involved in CCJA are taking their experience and knowledge back to their schools, and the other kids are learning stuff from them.”<sup>29</sup> In the beginning, they attracted people who wanted to be jazz musicians, as they grew, they realized that there were a lot of kids who did not want to be jazz musicians, but just loved playing jazz and music in general and who wanted to see how far they could take it. CCJA has become not only a great place to develop young and serious musicians, but a place for kids who just want to learn about the art form. While only 20% of students actually go into jazz as a career, the other 80% help with something just as important, the jazz audience. They are connected to the jazz community and they understand jazz on a level the general public does not. CCJA is giving to these students who in turn give back to jazz simply by listening and appreciating. They are a bridge between the professional jazz community, the next generation of jazz musicians, and the music’s audience.

CCJA currently teaches small groups in five locations in Colorado: Denver, Boulder, Highlands Ranch, Fort Collins, and Longmont. They also have one big band, a student vocal group and a professional level vocal group, a brass band, summer institutes, a boot camp, funk ensemble, fusion ensemble, recording classes, and a Latin ensemble. CCJA also has a weeklong camp in Westcliffe, CO called Jazz in the Sangres. While students do have to audition for the camp, no auditions are required for any of the other groups or programs. Small groups meet for two hours a week for nine weeks and then have a concert at one of the venues in their area, such

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<sup>28</sup> Chris and Paul Romaine, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Brad Goode, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, March 12, 2018.

as a restaurant, art gallery, or jazz club. Summer institute groups meet for four two-hour rehearsals and then have a concert, all within one week. Because it is the summer, many students' schedules vary from week to week more than they do within the school year, making these shorter programs easier to attend. They have other one-day workshops as well, like She-Bop, a workshop for female players and Kinder-Bop, a workshop for youngsters focused on getting them into jazz at an early age. CCJA recently did this for an entire elementary school. They also put on major events like the Big Band Boogie Bash. This is an all-day event that takes place in the Mercury Cafe in Denver and features several of the high school and college big bands in the Northern Colorado area including UNC, UC Boulder, Boulder High School, and the CCJA big band. Often people will call CCJA for paid gigs, in this case, Paul and Chris will either contact alumni or current students or both to form a band. This is a great opportunity for current students to actually play real gigs. CCJA usually has its concerts in each of the areas where rehearsals take place, though this was not always the case. Most of the concerts used to take place in Denver before Highway 36 was expanded in 2012.<sup>30</sup> Once renovated, Highway 36 allowed for an easier commute between Denver and Boulder, making it more accessible for people from Boulder that had a hard time driving to Denver. Boulder concerts are now held at Nissi's restaurant. Other venues include Dazzle Jazz Club and Nocturne Jazz Club in Denver, Mount Vernon Country Club in Golden, CO, and other local clubs or venues.<sup>31</sup>

Today, about 70% of CCJA's income comes from member fees, but they never turn anyone away for financial reasons. "In March of 2003, CCJA became a Colorado Non-profit corporation, and in early 2004 was granted 501 (c)(3) status." They also use SCFD grants which

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<sup>30</sup> Sarah Kuta, "After 3½ Years of Construction, U.S. 36 Expansion Complete," *Daily Camera* (Boulder, CO), January 20, 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Chris and Paul Romaine, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

comes from the arts tax in the Denver area. The Romaines see this as very important, not only for the money, but because it is a big step to legitimacy as a nonprofit organization. It is difficult to get, and it shows their viability as a program that contributes to the community. This grant is able to fund up to 15% a year, while the rest of the money is raised by individual or corporate contributions. Kolacny Music has been, from day one, a supportive sponsor and Flesher Hinton gives CCJA \$250 dollars in music every year. CCJA receives in-kind donations as well, such as folders, performance venues, free tax filing, and even free rent from sponsors. Random instruments also show up now and again from drum sets and vibes to pianos and sousaphones. Denver jazz clubs Dazzle and Nocturne also collaborate frequently with CCJA and offer up their clubs as venues for their performances. Paul praises these clubs because he sees it as a “win-win.” In partnering with CCJA, Dazzle attracts kids to their club which not only creates lifelong fans, it brings in their parents who buy food and drinks and are exposed to jazz and these venues. These are people who, otherwise, might not ever go to a jazz club. Chris says, “it’s all about relationship building.” “You have to be that guy everyone wants at their party,” adds Paul. But you cannot just be friends so they will give you money. You have to build real relationships with people, you must give to receive. Invest in their lives, inspire them, care about them.<sup>32</sup> You have to be true to your values and your mission and the more you do that, the more you get back.

CCJA has a board of directors, like every not for profit is required to have. The board is responsible for making sure that CCJA keeps their integrity legally and financially. Whatever they do must be in the scope of their mission, and they must always follow the laws. There are two different kinds of boards, advisory and policy or working boards. Working boards are more hands on and will help by volunteering or doing various other things that need to be done. Policy

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<sup>32</sup> Chris and Paul Romaine, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

boards are more focused on creating policies and keeping the financials of the organization. CCJA's board is always some mixture of these but currently, it is more of a working board than ever. Committees are also formed to take on different aspects of the organization. There is a marketing committee, strategic planning committee, and a few others which the working board is able to help with. The board technically employs the Romaines, however one of Chris' jobs is to run the board. This ensures that the board and the organization are on the same side and the same page while reaching for the same goals. "Executive Director is an interesting position because you are leading people who can fire you," explains Chirs. Possible candidates for board members are either suggested or chosen from volunteers. What they have been doing for the past several years is sending out an email to everyone on their emailing list and seeing what comes back. They end up getting parents of past or present students and other members of the community who believe in what CCJA is doing and who want to give back. There may be up to twenty board members but CCJA currently has twelve with four officers: President, Vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. The rest are board members, however, everyone is on a committee. The full board only meets every other month while the committees meet every month to do specific work. Paul says that their current board is the most active, connected, and willing that they have ever had.

They also happen to be the best at fundraising. CCJA has just received \$50,000 from a donor, reaching their yearly fundraising goal in the first quarter. Chris says, "A lot of nonprofits are just going for people who are really connected and really have a lot of money and we've never been good at that. That has never been our forte, so we have boards with people who care a lot, who have great intentions." They sometimes feel bad for not knowing people with deep pockets. It can be frustrating because they can only do what they can do, but "it keeps getting

better.” When the Romaines decided to become a nonprofit, they had to decide to give up some degree of control. However, CCJA would not be around otherwise.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Chris and Paul Romaine, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HISTORY OF CCJA

CCJA would not be the prospering program it is today without the dedication from its devoted founders and curators Chris and Paul Romaine. Paul Romaine, co-founder and Artistic Director of CCJA, was born and raised in Denver and lives there to this day. He was born into a musical family where he was exposed to many different musicians and forms of music. Growing up he saw the “circle of life” in music. When he was born, his future high school band director was playing in a student band led by his father, called the Kolacny Teensters in 1959. Paul’s father worked at a music store and would serve people who would become parents of future students of his. Romaine would come to play with musicians that had once been students of his father, like Chuck Snider and Jerry Noonan. He witnessed the great effect that a teacher can have on their student and was able to see the growth and development of these musicians he was around. Paul Romaine says that at the time he was not thinking about any of this, it was just life. A visceral, natural way of learning music by doing, totally separated from academia. This is coming from a place not motivated by money, grades, or test scores. Romaine says that “what had to happen first, before CCJA, was for me to have a professional career as a jazz musician.”<sup>34</sup>

Starting when he was only 14 years old to age 40 when he and Chris Romaine founded the organization, Paul had a 26-year long career. He played every kind of jazz gig imaginable including gigs with the Colorado symphony, high school pop shows, professional bands, jazz clubs, bars, and everything in between. During this time, he played with Jack McDuff, Charlie

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<sup>34</sup> Chris and Paul Romaine, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

Rouse, and many others, unaware at the time of how each of them would affect him and his playing. “In between gigs, he studied jazz composition at the Lamont School of Music and, in 1991 received a degree in recording engineering from the University of Colorado.” Paul Romaine also alludes to tough times he had during his career, from financial troubles, to personal struggles. His goal through all of this was just to play and live off of gigs. After marrying Chris Romaine, the couple attended parties and “hangs” where every jazz musician in Denver made an appearance. The Romaine house was always a center for some of these hangs, opening their doors to all musicians and friends. The Romaines see everyone as a person and recognize that we all have our own struggles, they are open and warm people who value connections. The strength of the community comes from everyone knowing each other and being friends. Paul connected different parts of the community just by doing what he was doing, playing gigs and hanging. The main foundation for CCJA comes from those connections.

Chris Romaine, co-founder and Executive Director of CCJA, “provides executive leadership and manages its daily operations. She wears many hats in this position and relies on a passion for jazz and youth, a varied background, a love of learning, and resourcefulness to do so. Mrs. Romaine participates with the Artistic Director, the Board, and the faculty in planning and establishing program policies, objectives, and priorities as well as directing the development of CCJA’s strategic action and fundraising plans.” Mrs. Romaine received a “Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Public Policy from the University of Denver, where she also minored in music at the Lamont School of Music. She later received her secondary teaching certification and taught Social Studies, and some music, in Cherry Creek public schools for five years.”<sup>35</sup> Paul describes Chris as very resourceful and good with networking. During a time of financial trouble, she

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<sup>35</sup> “CCJA’s Mission,” Colorado Conservatory for the Jazz Arts, Accessed March 18, 2018, <https://jazzarts.org/ccjas-mission/>.

wrote a book about Victorian Bed and Breakfasts that paid for their rent during that time. She called up these B&B's and got line art drawings and other useful information to include in her book. Soon after, she started a tea shop/catering business with her mother and sister on 32nd Ave. It was successful for several years until its sale in 1999, bringing her valuable business experience and management skills.<sup>36</sup> Chris did not go to school for business or attend any classes, she learned by diving in and doing it. After the sale of the tea shop, the circumstances were lining up for the creation of a new conservatory.

Joe Andres, a music teacher in the Denver area who is friends with the Romaines, would bring professional rhythm sections into his elementary schools to play with his massive 80-piece jazz band. Andres would take the band to various festivals and have Paul, Mark Simon, Jeff Jenkins, Mark Sloniker, Dwight Killian, Hugh Ragin, or Ron Miles play with them. Andres "firm belief was that if you're standing next to it you're going to hear it and you're going to do something, you're going to feel it." Slowly, Paul began to do more things with schools. He taught clinics for bands, played for school events and started to notice the impact that it had on the kids. "[Kids] aren't going to go out to a jazz club and hear this stuff, but man, [they] have to go to band class." For most, band was the only place they were exposed to this music and playing with professional musicians was the only time they got that visceral feeling of groove.<sup>37</sup>

While all of this is happening, arts in the 90's were taking massive budget cuts. In 1995 the budget for the National Endowment for the Arts was \$162,311,000 and dropped to \$99,470,000 the next year.<sup>38</sup> There were very few strong feeder programs for high school bands.

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<sup>36</sup> Chris and Paul Romaine, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> "National Endowment for the Arts Appropriations History," National Endowment for the Arts, Accessed April 6, 2018, <https://www.arts.gov/open-government/national-endowment-arts-appropriations-history>.

This was leaving a hole in the musical circle of life and provided an opportunity for Mr. and Mrs. Romaine.

Paul remembers a turning point for him, he was playing a regular noon-to-four gig up at the Blackhawk Casino that he had every day, when he just walked out in the middle of a set. The gig had become so mundane and dark for Paul that he just could not continue. He did not talk to anyone, he just drove to a field and sat there contemplating. He threw away a good chunk of his income for his own sanity. Luckily, he was married to Chris. Paul recalls that she had always wanted to help him expose the things inside of him that were “cool.” Often things that he did not know existed. She encouraged him to get involved with education. At the time, a group Paul played in called Convergence was dipping their toe into the educational pool. They had begun working with Jazz Aspen Snowmass doing clinics and started learning how to teach the music they so loved. Today, many people learn music through school where everything is taught in a classroom setting and put through the academic lens. They learn to play, create and teach by these means which is effective but can leave out the experience of gigging and playing with different kinds of people. Paul and his friends had learned to play by being in the jazz scene and they had to figure out a way to teach on their own terms. They were coming at it from the opposite direction than most other educators today do. They were teaching having had the experience of being out in the real world instead of teaching based on a book or what they learned in their jazz pedagogy class in college. This made them unique. Paul and Chris began discussing their own upbringing and what they found influential, helpful or unhelpful, and what worked and what did not work. The Jamey Aebersold camps, which were modeled off of the Kenton Clinics, were a huge influence on Chris. The couple wanted to put the best experiences of their lives together. They also noticed that while the hangs were great, there were no youth

involved. They were being left out. They few that could play, if they stuck around long enough, would eventually be welcomed into the community, but they majority were just the annoying kids who tried to sit in every once in a while. They had no chance to build relationships with the professional musicians around town. Chris is able to look at things from a unique perspective and ask questions that get to the core of a problem and that make you think. Paul describes Chris as a visionary, someone who sees the possibilities. She has grand ideas like writing a book, opening a tea shop, and starting a conservatory. These things seem unrelated and almost crazy to attempt if you have no formal training, but she made them work. Chris started “picking at [Paul’s] soul.” When all Paul could see in himself was a poser, she saw something else, something he could be.

Chris did what she does best and started asking questions. “What would it look like if we did have a conservatory? What would you do? Who would you hire?” “It should be all the cats that can play.” Paul responded. He wanted to employ the people that knew how to play, that you could hear play around town. That is who kids should learn from, “the people who have played with other people, that know what that feels like.” From there they started writing down names including Jeff Jenkins and Ken Walker, the people he was playing with. To get a feel for interest, they sent out 300 flyers to different schools, and got only three responses back. That put the idea for a big band in the trash for now and with only three members, they would not be able to afford to hire the musicians they wanted. The role of instructor fell upon Paul himself. The first three kids were trumpeter Kenny Warren and tenor saxophonists Michael Bailey and Tommy Morimoto. Paul pulled a drummer from his studio, and scraped together a piano player, AJ Salas, and a bass player, Jean-Luc Davis. The first CCJA group had been formed. In the interview,

Chris says, “[It] was really perfect, because it was like the universe was actually showing us that what we need to do was focus on small groups and improvisation.”<sup>39</sup>

They had the group, now it was time to play. Paul knew a man named Pete Vriesenga, the president of the musicians’ union in Denver from his time playing bass trombone in Paul’s big band. During that time, they had fantasized about having a musicians’ union building with a recording studio and after hours hang to give the jazz community a sort of hub. When he became president, he tried to push the idea through, but it was rejected. When looking for a place to rehearse, Vriesenga offered up the musicians’ union building as a rehearsal space. He wanted the union to be more involved with the youth and education, so they started rehearsing there on Saturday mornings. Paul pulled out tunes he usually played with “the cats” and gave them to the kids. The material might have been too hard, but the kids loved it and they were having fun learning hard music that they probably had no business playing. Only three weeks after the start of the organization, Paul brought the group to play their first ever performance on the radio at KUVO Jazz.<sup>40</sup>

From their first year in 2000 to 2005, the program went from six members to eighty. In 2001, they were looking at two groups when about ten Denver School of the Arts students just showed up at rehearsal. All of the sudden they had upwards of twenty kids in the program and they had to figure out what to do with them. This is, in part, thanks to the instructors over at DSA who knew the Romaines because both of their daughters attended for years. Paul remembers another time when the director at Green Mountain High School loaded up a van full of students and drove them to the first CCJA rehearsal of the season. Groups had already been made and set, but they never turn kids away, so they made it work. This really encapsulates the spirit of jazz

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<sup>39</sup> Chris and Paul Romaine, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

and of the Romaines. Even if you just show up unannounced or expected, you are welcome, as long as you are there to play. It would take some extra work to piece everything together, but it would be worth it. This is part of what makes CCJA and its founders so special, a willingness to help others accomplish something despite what it will take to do so. In Paul's words, "We're going to make this work."

CCJA saw tremendous growth during those five years, they were on to something. They started hiring other professional jazz musicians to teach the groups and CCJA became a viable not-for-profit business. However, they would soon be hit with trouble. In 2008 when the recession hit, CCJA took a beating and the program lost half of their students. Parents could not afford to pay for it, many were out of work. At this time, the budget was 95% paid and 5% donations. They tried to give out as many scholarships as they could, but donations were down and there was very little money to go around. The only way Paul and Chris could keep the program going was to slash their salaries in half for the year. It was a tough time for the Romaines, but they kept CCJA afloat and ever since, their numbers have been rising. Today, they have the highest enrollment they have ever had with about ninety members.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PEDAGOGY

Something else unique about CCJA is its pedagogical approach to jazz. Students who sign up for a typical CCJA session are placed in small groups or combos. This is different from the way jazz is taught in schools, other than at the college level. Most of the time, kids do not get education like this. Most schools have a jazz big band, which is great, but that does not leave much room for individual attention. The director has to focus on getting the band to play together and learn their music. They do not have much, if any, time to teach improvisation and theory, or to work with individuals who need more help. The small group approach to pedagogy lets the directors and mentors give more focused instruction and allows the students to learn more with a greater level of retention and detail. Each combo has a director and sometimes a Near Peer Mentor, which is discussed in the “Innovations” chapter. The director has a lot of freedom in the way they choose to run their group and pick repertoire based on their own tastes and the level of the students. Many professional bands have their own arrangements of classic compositions that often differ greatly from their source material and contain more modern elements. Because of this, Paul encourages directors to bring in arrangements of jazz standards and their own compositions rather than only having the students play a melody off of a lead sheet. This gets them used to hearing and playing together in a professional small group context. Students are also encouraged to bring in their own compositions and arrangements. Anything that a student

brings in is played and as a result, students are motivated to create their own material and develop their skills as composers and arrangers in addition to their playing.<sup>42</sup>

The students typically prepare a set of tunes for a concert which usually consists of a collection of three to five songs. Through these tunes, students learn the different aspects of jazz including styles, feels, time, improvisation techniques, form, and theory. They are able to focus in on specific aspects of the music and really understand how it works rather than being taught a large amount of information that they might not fully internalize. There are also rehearsals where the kids just want to “jam,” so they play standards or songs that are common among the jazz community. Jazz standards are a set of songs that every jazz musician is familiar with and can play from memory at a moment’s notice, even if the musicians have never met before. These songs are part of the jazz language and provide a jumping off point for musicians to interact and hear each other so they can find others that they enjoy playing with.<sup>43</sup>

From session to session, students are put in different groups with different directors. This allows for the kids to play with many people their age that they might never have gotten a chance to play with otherwise. It forces them how to learn to adapt to a group and really pay attention to the way other people play. Brad Goode says that if these kids learn from “all of these different mentors, and they go from group to group, they get lots of different approaches and lots of different individual input.”<sup>44</sup> The pedagogical approach of CCJA is strong and effective but the most common topic brought up in every interview of the teachers, mentors, administrators, and former members, was community.

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<sup>42</sup> Chris and Paul Romaine, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Brad Goode, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, March 12, 2018.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CCJA COMMUNITY

What makes it different from other educational programs, is that it is born out of more nonacademic “stuff”, a visceral feeling of what the music is, its connection to people and the way it unites the musical community.<sup>45</sup> This is probably the most important part of what this organization is about. This community exists in every aspect of CCJA. It was born out of it, in a way. When Paul started hiring teachers, he called his friends, the professionals in the jazz community. The strong community CCJA has created allows for a more connected jazz community which perpetuates the musical circle of life that Paul talked about, opportunities to better yourself as a human, a support system, and a clear path toward excellence because everyone has the same goal, to serve the music and each other.

Alumnus Rico Jones says that the thing that ties it all together “is the love and everyone’s willingness to share and be open.” Almost everyone that teaches or has been in the program is kind and willing to create a positive relationship.<sup>46</sup> Kids who are really excited by music are able to get together and play with kids from other schools that are just as excited by it and they are able to share and learn from one another on a weekly basis.<sup>47</sup> This allows the kids who enjoy this music to find others outside of their friend group that enjoy the music as much as they do and stay connected until they are professional musicians themselves. By that point, they will have known and played with each other for years.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Rico Jones, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, March 7, 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Jean-Luc Davis, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, March 17, 2018.

Dr. John Gunther, Jazz Studies Director at CU Boulder and CCJA instructor, says that it provides and builds community, it gives these young people a chance to learn how to grow up and mature and have something to hold on to.<sup>48</sup> Everyone interviewed said something similar to this, including Paul McKee, jazz trombone professor and CCJA instructor, who said that without CCJA, everyone is sequestered in their own high school programs and do not get to experience other players outside of their program. CCJA combines players from everywhere, and many continue to play together outside of CCJA.<sup>49</sup> The idea of the musical circle of life is evident and an important part of the community CCJA creates. Brad Goode mentioned that “if I look around today at who’s playing in the clubs and in the concert in our area...the majority of them are students I first saw as students in CCJA. The proof is in the level of musicianship that these students are exhibiting by the time they’re juniors and seniors in high school.”<sup>50</sup>

The best example of the gifts that the musical circle of life can bring is Annie Booth. Booth is a pianist and composer in the Denver area that came up through CCJA. She heard about CCJA at CMEA in 2005 when talking to another piano player her age. She immediately joined that spring. She played in the small groups and attended the Jazz Boot Camp and Westcliffe Camp several times. These camps helped inspire to study music in college. After going to college and playing on cruise ships for a while, she came back to Colorado and was contacted by Paul and Chris to help with administration duties in 2014. Today she is the CCJA Program Assistant. Her duties include, but are not limited to, graphic design, website upkeep, logistics with registration, transcribing charts, teaching groups and boot camps, and she created the She-Bop women’s jazz workshop. She says that her role with the organization has “blossomed” and she has taken on more responsibility and ownership of her role. When asked how her perspective

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<sup>48</sup> John Gunther, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, March 8, 2018.

<sup>49</sup> Paul McKee, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, March 8, 2018.

<sup>50</sup> Brad Goode, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, March 12, 2018.

has changed about CCJA going from a student to Program Assistant, she said, “In a way, it kind of makes me feel the same about CCJA...there is this sort of magic element there, it’s this connection quality that exists there. I felt that...place of belonging.” She felt that as a student and now as a teacher and administrator. As a participant you don’t really know what it takes to put something out like this, you gain a lot more appreciation for what has to be done behind the scenes. That magic comes from the top, “it comes from Chris and Paul Romaine. You can have a real shiny and effective, profit earning, machine of an organization,” but if that attention to detail isn’t at the top, it doesn’t permeate to every part of the organization. “They sweat over every detail.” if there is a student that is worried or feels weird, they worry about them, they want that person to feel the belonging.<sup>51</sup>

One of the biggest cultivators of the CCJA community is the Music in the Sangres Jazz camp in Westcliffe, CO. Westcliffe started in 2001, taking over a jazz festival that had been around for 20 years. When the Romaines were approached about doing a jazz camp there, they just said okay. This was not a money-making proposition, but they knew the success of many different jazz camps around the world and took a shot at running their own.<sup>52</sup> The camp at Westcliffe ended up becoming one of the students’ favorite parts of CCJA. In the online survey sent out to the CCJA mailing list and many of the interviews conducted, most of the student responses mentioned this camp in some way.<sup>53</sup> When asked what made it so special, Brad Goode replied, “We go away to a place that’s secluded and beautiful, and we’re all together and we’re just hanging as one group for the week and we’re...having fun doing non-music activities and making friendships and getting to know each other and, with that, it’s a high faculty to student

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<sup>51</sup> Annie Booth, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, March 10, 2018.

<sup>52</sup> Chris and Paul Romaine, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

<sup>53</sup> Zimny, Jonathan, “What is CCJA to You?” (Anonymous Online Survey) February 5, 2018.

ratio. It's a really intensive experience for the students."<sup>54</sup> The students who are most into it congregate here. Matteo Bassani, another alumnus of CCJA stated that Westcliffe was special, it was a crucial turning point for him and he made a lot of good friends, "those moments are going to be with me until the day I die."<sup>55</sup>

Students learn improvisation, both musically and otherwise in CCJA. Kids do not get to improvise much at school and in their own social lives. They also learn courage. It takes courage to not only get up on stage, but to improvise and express yourself in the moment. You may or may not know what you are doing or what you want to say or how to say it, but you are trying. The kids get a broader sense of community and connection. They discover that there are other people who care as much about music as they do, and they get to know them. They learn to nurture those connections and make lifelong friends. This applies to all aspects of their life. Kids can tend to stick with their clicks. They are not always open to meeting and hanging out with other kids outside of their normal friend circle. The Romaines try to do their best to keep this from happening within their groups.

Sometimes a group of four or five kids can stick together while alienating the remaining one or two members. At the time of their interview, Paul said this was actually currently happening and that he and Chris were going to talk to the group about what kind of human beings they were being. The Romaines lead CCJA by example and care not only about the musical education of their students, but their well-being. They take the initiative to talk to students about how they treat others and more besides just the music. It is not just for everyone else's sake, but their own. The students are able to learn self-awareness and mindfulness before other kids their age.

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<sup>54</sup> Brad Goode, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, March 12, 2018.

<sup>55</sup> Matteo Bassani, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, March 2, 2018.

Tolerance and forgiveness are other traits they pick up through music and CCJA. One of the most common problems that Paul and Chris run into is a kid thinking that they have been placed in a group that is too low for them. Chris says, “Paul works really hard to help them understand what being a leader is and how important leadership is, and giving back and not only looking at, ‘what am I getting out of this?’” The earlier you can instill that in them, the better off they are. Paul talks about putting Rocco Williams, a vibes player, in a similar situation when he was in eighth grade, “You should be in a [higher combo], but you’re in here with some eighth graders. Let yourself be brilliant and let them see it and share. Learn how to do that sooner than later.” They also learn jazz etiquette, like how many choruses are too many, how to show up prepared and on time, when to help set up or tear down, or what to say to people who you perceive are not as good of a player as you. They learn that there is the person and the player. How a person plays does not affect their character. Being a bad player does not make you a bad person.<sup>56</sup> You cannot learn skills like this from people you are not connected to. When the head of an organization takes the time to teach you something, you feel it on a deep level. It makes you feel like you belong somewhere.

Groups of alumni in different cities like LA, New York, and San Francisco are sticking together. They get together to play and hang and send pictures to Paul and Chris when they do. When kids decide to go visit these cities or move there, they have a built-in safety net of people that came from the same place and organization and are immediately welcomed as family.<sup>57</sup> CCJA is creating a network inside the jazz community that is supportive and welcoming. Everything that CCJA does is in service of the community. The strength of the community exists because the Romaines care for the music and for people.

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<sup>56</sup> Chris and Paul Romaine, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER VII

### INNOVATIONS

CCJA is always innovating. The Romaines are always looking to the future and to what they could do to improve the students' experience or to get more people involved. Up until 2010, groups were run by the instructors who were professional musicians in the Denver Metro area. When they had a kid that could really play, sometimes they would have them play a secondary instrument in a group to build their chops on that or put them in a combo with little experience to put them in a leadership position. As the program began to grow and age, kids would come back from college or from New York and offer their services. At this point, the Romaines were running the show and were trying to cover every little detail themselves. Paul was directing a group and had to deal with logistical problems at the same time. Even simple things like opening locked doors became a problem because he would have to leave his group to go take care of it. With former students around, he could delegate the tasks to them because he knew and trusted them to do the job. Soon the menial tasks evolved into helping out with the groups, which led to the Near Peer Mentor Program. These young adults were people that knew what CCJA was about, had come up through it, and had now been out in the jazz community. Most of the time, these kids were just trying to find work and survive. They did not have a place to go and were just trying to carve out their own spot in the community. So, what better place to work than CCJA? This gave them the opportunity to work for the very organization that gave them the chance to grow and learn. CCJA now had a group of young alumni who were eager to help in any way they could. The Near Peer Mentor Program was a "game changer." Not only did the

youth of Colorado have a connection to the actual jazz community with their directors, they had a connection to people who were closer to their age but had been through the program and knew what they were going through.<sup>58</sup> These near peer mentors had a similar perspective to the students while still knowing what the real world outside of school was like. Brad Goode said that “it’s great for the near peer mentors to get some teaching experience” and to be in touch with the students.<sup>59</sup> This created another pillar beneath the bridge between the youth and the jazz community. Alumnus, former Near Peer Mentor, and instructor Daryl Gott remarked that it was cool being able to put his two cents in and to be able to help kids more personally. It really helped him hone in on how to teach. He always thought that he was not good enough for a lot of the opportunities that Paul gave to him, but he was thrown in and it ended up being the best thing for him. “Even to this day he does stuff like that for me.” Gott dropped out of his school’s music program junior year because of circumstances there, but he was still able to play through CCJA. He said that he might have stopped playing if not for that. Through CCJA he learned discipline, and, in his groups, he teaches that you can use that and the problem-solving skills you learn here in every aspect of your life, even if you do not want to go into music for a living. Sometimes it is much easier to relate and receive info from people closer in age to you, rather than to get that info from someone thirty years older than you.<sup>60</sup>

This brought an exponential increase in change to CCJA. CCJA could now be reconnected with parents of alumni. Those parents were saw how much that CCJA had done for their kid and were giving back and donations were going up as a result of CCJA employing their child. This is all something that the Romaines did not see coming. They just saw a kid they knew that needed a place to go and they needed some things done, so they gave them a job. They saw

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Brad Goode, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, March 12, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Daryl Gott, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, March 7, 2018.

it as their responsibility. They are just good people. Because of their generosity, their business did well. Peer mentors dramatically brought up the performance level of the groups as well. Sometimes one horn player, who really knew what to do, could bring together the entire band by leading with their playing. It also allowed for more individualized attention for the kids. While the director was working on improving the band as a whole, the peer mentor could take the time to address individuals. They are able to model and help explain things to students in a way they can understand. Most importantly, CCJA is important to them. They understand the passion and mindset of the organization and care about making CCJA and its groups better. When a kid sees someone not much older than them that is really excited and passionate about jazz, it excites the kids too. They can ask them questions or try things that they may not feel comfortable doing with the instructor. It brings everything closer to their generation and makes it easier to relate to. It's not just academic, its spiritual.

Another way these alumni are useful is subbing when someone does not show up or gets sick, there is always someone available to fill in at a moment's notice. This happens at both rehearsals and performances. Instead of having to cancel, reschedule, or make do without a full ensemble, the students get a full band every time and a fighting chance at success. Like the people Paul grew up around who took lessons from his dad who would have children that Paul would end up teaching, CCJA created its own circle of life. Music is about giving and the more you give the gift of music, the more you get back. In that way, the Near Peer Mentors also get something back. They learn how to teach, to lead, to care, and to get out of themselves. They also have opportunities to learn skills in other aspects of music like managing a stage or putting groups together. They are chomping at the bit to help and give back.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Chris and Paul Romaine, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

CCJA has recently been trying to give the local community an opportunity to hear jazz. They will have groups play before other concerts, in nursing homes, City Park Jazz, Westminster Jazz Festival, art walks, the MLK parade, and more. CCJA recently held a concert at a pop-up jazz club in Ken Carroll Ranch. The idea was to bring jazz and other music to people in the suburbs who cannot or will not make the drive into downtown Denver to see the music. They had a local high school group open for Convergence which allowed the students to get to stay and hear a professional group with drinks and snacks provided. There was also a door prize with tickets to Dazzle to entice people to come out to a show. This gives the students more chances to perform and exposes the community to jazz while showing them what these young musicians are capable of. In addition to the community outreach CCJA has been doing, they also do educational outreach. CCJA sends a group of alumni or other musicians to a school to perform for the music students and clinic their bands. I have done several of these myself. The educational outreach is great for giving students information they are not getting from their directors and for exposing them to CCJA. The alumni have completely taken over the educational outreach. Paul and Chris no longer have to worry about it and often they forget when it is even happening.<sup>62</sup> These outreaches were great for my own journey as it was the first time I really got to teach jazz to a large group of people. I give one on one jazz lessons but until doing these outreaches, I had no experience teaching jazz to a class. It allowed me to be relaxed because I had six other people up there with me, it was not all on me to teach. Each time I have done it I think back on what I could have said to make things clearer or how I can bring up more relevant things. It has been great for my development as a jazz instructor.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LESSONS LEARNED

The conservatory may be very successful, but they are not immune to failure. When asked if there was anything that they wish they could go back and redo, or if there were any mistakes they wanted to go back and fix, I was met with silence. Finally, Paul explained that he would not change anything. They had their share of failures, but all of those failures led them to where they are today. If you ask other people they may recall moments where they were not their best self and wish they had acted differently, but with Paul and Chris, that does not really happen. They are two of the best souls you can find and always conduct themselves with respect toward people. Because of this, they always act with the best intentions in mind. If something fails, it is because they miscalculated interest or something similar. Paul says, “I don’t know how else you would find that out.” They are able to try something and find out if it works or not. They throw things against the wall and see what sticks. While universities have to take five years to roll out a program that may or may not work, CCJA can figure that out in a month, with little financial loss. They recount one of the flops they had with the Fam Family Concert. They hired the people, put up posters and flyers, advertised on the radio... and no one showed up. Whatever the reason for the failure, it was one concert.<sup>63</sup> They tried something and it did not work, but they learned from it and moved on.

Vetting board members is something else that they were not good at at first, but failure is the best teacher and they would not have the board they have today without learning how to find the right people. Paul talked about times when their board of directors was not completely on

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

their side. Ideally, 100% of the board is financially invested in some way, however small. “It looks good on paper when you are applying for grants or other donations.” It shows that the board is invested in the program unanimously. They are all on board with the direction of the program and things are going smoothly for everyone involved. Paul recalled a past board member, “We had this one guy, he was a lawyer, and he just flat out refused to even donate ten bucks.” “That was a real low point,” says Chris. Most of the problems CCJA has had have been financial, not having enough to do what they wanted to do. Paul chimed in with, “His sage advice was, ‘Endeavour to persevere.’” This was the same year that they cut their salaries in half. They say that they have learned a lot about how to select the board since then. They have learned to vet the board a little better by asking the right questions, making sure that they fit in with the culture and have the same values as CCJA. It is more important to the Romaines that who they take on have the right reasons for wanting to be on the board as opposed to having the best skills. The logic of it is important, but the heart is more so. Chris talks about how it has taken a while for them to be okay with being themselves and talking about things like love at a board meeting. They think of the kids first. They want them to be cared for first. Everything else they do with CCJA comes from that and they want to find board members who agree with them. “[The kids] have a lot of needs other than learning the music. The music is just a conduit for other things that they are learning about themselves and about each other, and how to communicate.” This has taken a while to figure out how to do. Some board members say that CCJA needs more recognition, that everyone in Denver should know who they are and what they are doing. But Chris says that “there is validity in finding your tribe and being the very best you can be for them. CCJA is not for everybody and we can’t be. That would be setting ourselves up for failure.” There are other programs or forms of jazz education that you can feel are not coming

from this place, the place of truth and integrity. Some people go out to clinic only to sell themselves or their band. Helping the students is almost secondary to maintaining their business model. They acknowledge that everyone is just doing their best, but it does not always feel like it is coming from the right place, compassion for the jazz students.<sup>64</sup>

When hiring directors, you might find out that someone you love that is a great player, might not be the best teacher. However, this can be an opportunity for them to learn that skill. If they are good people with the right intentions, they can learn better pedagogy, they just need the opportunity to learn by doing. They also mention how when looking up to other organizations that have been around and established themselves, they might try to put on a big gala event like the big organizations do, only to have it tank before it gets off the ground. In that case, it was just not the time. “But you wouldn’t know it wasn’t the time unless you tried it. It’s much easier to send out a hundred form letters to all your parents asking for donations...than it is to spend two months and thousands of dollars finding a venue and creating an event and maybe you get five people that are interested.” Donors know that the money they give is going directly to the kids and it is not being spent on some big event.<sup>65</sup>

Chris says her biggest regret is not being able to keep up her relationships with everyone to the degree that she wants to. There is just not enough time to check in with everyone she knows and stay up to date with the goings on in their lives. There are people that she really cares about, and she wants them to know that she cares. She recalls two suicides of alumni and how she wishes she had been able to keep up their relationship to a better degree. She knows that she probably could not have changed the outcome, but she wanted to be there for those people more

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

than was possible for her.<sup>66</sup> Failure, to the Romaines, is part of the process. They try new things and sometimes they do not work, but they learn from their mistakes and move forward.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER IX

### OTHER JAZZ EDUCATION PROGRAMS

While CCJA is a great organization, there are many other successful jazz education programs in the United States. SFJazz is a San Francisco based educational program with many different offerings. They have an award winning High School All-Star Jazz Combo and Big Band that is comprised of some of the best high school musicians around. They also have their Monday Night Band which is open to enrollment for intermediate to advanced players of all ages in the bay area. This band meets for a twelve-week session that culminates in a performance gala. The band plays music of all genres and gives members opportunities to perform and compose. SFJazz also hosts several workshops and pre-performance talks with the guest artists. Some of the workshops include masterclasses, lectures, and classes on looping and digital composition. In addition to these programs, SFJazz works with schools in the area. They provide scholarship opportunities, school day performances for K-12 students, and free jazz residencies. SFJazz is doing a lot of great things for jazz in the bay area.<sup>67</sup>

Jazz at Lincoln Center's Jazz Academy is another program that is doing great work for jazz on the east coast. Their mission is:

“To entertain, enrich and expand a global community for Jazz through performance, education and advocacy. We believe Jazz is a metaphor for Democracy. Because jazz is improvisational, it celebrates personal freedom and encourages individual expression.

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<sup>67</sup> “Education Brochure,” SF Jazz Collective, Accessed January 3, 2018, <https://www.sfjazz.org/globalassets/pdfs/2018-sfjazz-education-brochure.pdf>.

Because jazz is swinging, it dedicates that freedom to finding and maintaining common ground with others. Because jazz is rooted in the blues, it inspires us to face adversity with persistent optimism.”

Jazz Academy offers a business leadership workshop, several tuition-free groups at the middle school and high school levels, a band director workshop, pre-concert discussions, visiting band workshops, and listening parties where musicians and teachers play famous records for students and talk about critical listening skills and discuss why the music changed the shape of jazz. Jazz at Lincoln Center is dedicated to teaching young musicians the importance of jazz and educating them about its roots and history.<sup>68</sup>

In the Midwest, the Jazz Institute of Chicago is a driving force behind jazz education. “The Jazz Institute of Chicago is an attempt to organize Jazz, an attempt to unify the various schools of Jazz while maintaining the individuality or creative process of all of its several beautiful forms. The fact that musicians—and they must be the nucleus for such a project—from traditional to avant-garde can plan a concert together is a sign that the project is working.” They help produce many of the jazz festivals and concert series in Chicago since 1979, including the Chicago Jazz Festival. They work with schools to build jazz programs and expand the knowledge of their teachers. The Jazz Institute of Chicago provides a Jazz Masters Residency program, a jazz camp, a Teachers Advisory Council which brings public school music teachers together to help expand opportunities for jazz students in the area, a local high school jazz band festival, jam sessions, a Women’s Leadership Initiative, and the Jazz Ambassadors program which provides students with instruction, live performances, workshops, and master classes. This

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<sup>68</sup> “Jazz Academy,” Jazz at the Lincoln Center, Accessed December 30, 2017, <https://academy.jazz.org/>.

may be the closest program to CCJA, with its ties to the community, schools, and its dedication towards its students.<sup>69</sup>

Another program that is very similar to CCJA is Jazz St. Louis. They offer jazz combos that meet weekly and are taught by a collection of musicians, several early education programs, artist residencies, workshops, and the Essentially Ellington Jazz Festival in St. Louis.<sup>70</sup> The Thelonious Monk Institute offers several programs for jazz education that are unique from the other programs mentioned here. They have the Peer to Peer Program which takes “musicians from eleven public performing arts high schools served by the Institute present weeklong tours for their peers in other cities. The student musicians are accompanied by distinguished guest artists.” Student perform for the student body and then talk about the importance of jazz, along with its history. After the performance, the students sit side by side and play the music of the school’s band while giving tutelage. This is similar to CCJA’s Near Peer Mentor Program but in a more temporary format. The Monk Institute also has a Bebop to Hip-Hop program. This program started in LA in 2004 and brings jazz and hip-hop students and artists together to create a new art form. This blending of genres is a wonderful expression of creativity and promotes unity and exploration.<sup>71</sup> The Jazz Education Network is another organization that has been a great support to the jazz community. JEN provides “numerous performances resources, educational outreach, and [produces] the largest performance/educational conference to the global jazz community, JEN has become the leader in networking students, educators and

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<sup>69</sup> “Jazz Institute of Chicago,” Jazz Institute of Chicago, Accessed January 3, 2017, <http://jazzinchicago.org/education-programs/>.

<sup>70</sup> “For the Love of Jazz,” Jazz St. Louis, Accessed January 5, 2017.,<https://jazzstl.org/education/>.

<sup>71</sup> “Education,” Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, Accessed January 4, 2017, <http://monkinstitute.org/education/>.

performers in this incredible musical art form.” JEN has also provided thousands of dollars for scholarships for young musicians and composers.<sup>72</sup>

There are many more excellent programs around including The Nash located in Phoenix, Arizona, the Tucson Jazz Institute in Tucson, Arizona, Earshot Jazz in Seattle, Washington, and the Berklee College of Music Summer programs. Even though all of these programs provide extracurricular jazz education and produce strong, young players, they are not all encompassing like CCJA. CCJA is focused on spreading the word of jazz to anyone interested. They do not close their doors to everyone but the best or focus on only one group, they build a community of jazz lovers. They think about the people first and foremost. They teach people why they should play jazz, not just how. And it all comes from the top. In this way no other program can compare. CCJA is embedded into the jazz community of Colorado and is a prime example of “the more you give, the more you get.” The strongest part about CCJA is that connection. When you have people that were given so much by the teachers and administrators, they feel a need to give back. People make lifelong friends and learn to care for each other, CCJA is about more than jazz and jazz education, it is the meaning of life for many of its members. In this way, no other program can outshine CCJA. This is the core of what the program is and is the most important thing to develop when starting a jazz education program. It’s about the hang.

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<sup>72</sup> “JEN,” Jazz Education Network, Accessed December 30, 2017, <http://jazzednet.org/>.

## CHAPTER X

### THE FUTURE OF CCJA

The future of CCJA is a bright one, they are currently trying to find a location and funds for a rehearsal space for their Denver chapter. Right now, they only have access to a space on the University of Denver campus for two hours a week. They want twenty-four-hour access to their own rehearsal space that they can use as more of a hang. They also want to put in a coffee/tea shop for students to be able to hang out and do work. They want it to be a place for jams, private lessons, workshops, rehearsals, and late-night hangs. This is something CCJA desperately needs and will add a lot to the organization. Paul says he wants to connect it all. He wants to connect every kid with every kid. He has an idea to do combined concerts with groups from different chapters. They would do their own sets and then play tunes together, showing them that they all know the same language. This would bring together people from different areas and create an even stronger community in a way that is inspirational. These events can bring parents together as well, while they watch their kids and converse over a beer in the audience. CCJA is also trying to develop more programs for young women. She-bop is a first step, but they want to host female jam sessions, start a female group, and have a female camp. This is for supporting female musicians and giving them a place to feel relaxed and comfortable enough to explore their own voice. Their goal is not to segregate however, Chris says that although she does not know what this will look like yet, she wants to start a dialogue between genders. There are a lot of perceptions about each other and things that are going unsaid that need to be talked about and discussed. Women in jazz is becoming a major social issue and CCJA wants to address this and

heal it in some way. They also want to introduce learn-to-play classes. As schools cut music programs, fewer students are getting the opportunity to learn to play an instrument. Adult programs are also being discussed. On the vocal side, CCJA is trying to develop the genre in Denver in an organic way. The vocal jazz genre in general has not evolved much. Two of the only major innovators in the genre are Kerry Marsh and Julia Dollison who happen to live in Greeley Colorado and work for the University of Northern Colorado. CCJA has put together a professional vocal jazz group to help move the genre forward as well as develop the vocal jazz community in Denver. The group, known as the Sharp 5, consists of five singers and a rhythm section. Each of the singers is either a talented singer or jazz instrumentalist. The group does their own arrangements and performs around Denver while also doing educational outreach.<sup>73</sup>

CCJA is always expanding and trying to diversify. They want to appeal to as many different types of people in different places as possible without losing who they are and without compromising the level of education and community they currently have. Everything is always changing, “you have to be willing to be open to opportunities.... you are always improvising. You have to be willing to change,” says Paul. None of this would be possible without the community they are in. It takes a lot of good people who know you and believe in you to make everything work. In order to use CCJA as a model for a jazz education program, the first thing you need is a couple of committed leaders. You need people that are invested and will continue to invest in the well-being of their students. It takes a lot to care so much about other people. Invest in people and you will be rewarded in kind. The more connected the program is to the jazz community, the more successful it will be. What makes CCJA different? Lauryn Romaine, the youngest Romaine daughter says that, “it’s the Heart of CCJA. That really goes back to Chris

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<sup>73</sup> Chris and Paul Romaine, Interviewed by Jonathan Zimny, January 10, 2018.

and Paul, which expands now to everyone involved in it. That is what makes CCJA what it is. It almost can't be replicated."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

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## OUR GRATITUDE

“I thank you for everything that you’ve done for the state of Colorado, for me, for all the musicians that have come before me and that will come after me. I think the world is a better place because of what you’re doing right now.” – Matteo Bassani

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be a part of CCJA and I hope I can just keep doing it. It’s been a great experience for me and I’ve learned a lot about teaching through trial and error, especially in working with younger age groups and having that experience of having to see what works and what doesn’t work in getting people to become musicians. I am grateful for that opportunity. I’m learning how to teach by being in this organization.” – Brad Goode

“I don’t want to tear up or anything but... it’s indescribable how much they’ve changed my life and have been responsible for me just being able to be where I’m at.” – Daryl Gott

“[CCJA is] a huge amount of work and I know that they are always having to put out fires here and there...and they really work hard in trying to make sure everybody has a good time and has an opportunity to play. I know how hard they work at this and I’m glad there are people like that who want to do this because not everybody would have the time and energy to devote to that. That’s probably a big reason it doesn’t exist in more places, it’s pretty much a full-time gig. I’m really thankful that they’re doing it because everyone is benefitting from it.” – Paul McKee

“I would just extend my greatest thanks and appreciation to Paul and Chris and all the teachers I had. They were all so generous and encouraging and kind. I certainly wouldn’t be here without the opportunities that they gave me and the faith they put in me, I am indebted to them for that.” – Rico Jones

“I know how hard they’ve worked and how much they’ve given to this organization and I’m so very grateful to be a part of it, it means a lot to me.” – John Gunther

“I wouldn’t be who I am today without them, honestly... Not only would I not be the musician I am today, or a musician period, but I don’t think I would be the same compassionate person... Paul and Chris really, honestly, inspire me with their...100% giving a shit about everything... Over the last four years, it’s really made a difference in how I think about things...just working with them so often, I see them more often than I see my parents, but the way that they think through things and work through things it’s made me kind of be a more caring person on every level. [I’m] a more caring and compassionate teacher and musician and more thoughtful about everything... Thank you for setting me on this path that I am on as a musician but also making me just a better person, because that’s really what they do and what the organization does... They are just amazing people, that’s what it comes down to, and their organization flows through that.” – Annie Booth

“Thank you, with a thousand exclamations points!” – Jean-Luc Davis

Anonymous -

“I think that this program is great, and really is underrated. Everything that CCJA has done for me is hard to put a price on, and I think that CCJA deserves to be more widely known.”

“I would like to thank Chris & Paul for their services they give to our kids and our CCJA community!”

“THANK YOU! Please don't stop, but when you do, make sure you're passing the torch to people who care as much as you do. So inspiring, thanks again!”

“From when I started CCJA to the last show I played, the Romaines have supported my musical endeavors as well as my life outside of music. I've been fortunate to run into Paul every so often and he still has that smile on his face and can rip a drum solo at any time of the day. CCJA is a main reason why music is such a big part of my life today, and I thank you for that!”

“The opportunities that CCJA and Paul represent would simply not be there without the group's effort, and that would be a loss for a Denver community that needs such programs to achieve any sort of cultural sophistication and music appreciation.”

“The Romaines are amazing.”

“Nice program. Keep up the good work.”

“Paul and Chris are some of the kindest and helpful people I have encountered. I hope the program continues to grow and serve the youth through music.”

“CCJA is an amazing organization that doesn't get near the credit it deserves.”

“I could not be more of a fan of CCJA and the Romaines! I will be forever grateful for the experiences they offered my son (and me through him) and I will be forever affected in so many ways but not least being able to appreciate and understand jazz for the rest of my life. My son will take his experiences, talent and jazz appreciation throughout his life and I have no doubt those gifts will manifest themselves in all sorts of wonderful ways. Denver (and Colorado and jazz) owes the Romaines for what they are doing to promote and create a world of jazz for younger generations.”

“LOVE THEM.”

“I really want them to know that they are providing so much more than just an extra-curricular activity for the kids in the community. Every interaction, communication, event, etc. that I've been a part of, their warmth, devotion, and passion come through so clearly. Honestly, CCJA as an organization, and the Romaines personally, have done more to inspire my son than any other area of his life. My son being kind of an intense kid who really needs inspiration in his life, I am beyond grateful for the role they have played. He really wouldn't be the young adult he is today without them.”

“Great people. I am so glad they came into our lives.”

“The Romaines have given so much to the music community in Denver. No amount of recognition and gratitude would be too much for what they have created.”

“We love the Romaines.”

“Wow. Without CCJA, I am certain we would be lacking in our local music scene. Their dedication is what confirms for me, the music world WILL go on! As they pass down the love and lessons of this wonderful art! And may the Trumpet Sound!!!”

“LOVE the Romaine's spirit, talent, passion and artistry. I can never get enough of the joy Paul exudes when playing.”

“The best! Should be duplicated in every city and school district.”

“What a great opportunity, I feel very grateful for it!”

“The dedication to education and the next generation is truly inspiring. The entire genre is indebted to people like the Romaine's.”

“I have so much gratitude for this organization and for the Romaines. I hear my friends from other parts of the country talk frequently about how they didn't have opportunities to study jazz like this where they grew up, and how they wish they did. CCJA not only instills passion in so many kids, but also provides them with the skills to actually bring their musical goals to realization. CCJA brings joy to students, their parents, and communities. I will forever be thankful to be a part of the CCJA family.”

“Chris and Paul Romaine are the best. Thank you so very much for all you do for these kids.”

“CCJA is dedicated to young people. The Romaine's share their love of music with all. They have a great program.”

“CCJA is a fantastic opportunity and the Romaines have shown themselves to be consistently dedicated and passionate about their work to keep jazz music and instruction accessible and affordable for young musicians.”

“Ever since coming to Colorado, and before I knew you, I have been fascinated with CCJA. It felt like every great musician from Colorado was involved with CCJA in some way. After discovering what CCJA was all about, I became convinced that it was the best thing for a young jazz musician today. While my education was wonderful, I can't help but wish that I had a program like CCJA around when I was younger. So, thank you for doing what you do, it truly does change lives. Thank you for being so kind, patient, and forgiving with me. You have given me a family out here and have supported me from the beginning. I would not be able to do what I do today without you and your love. Thank you.” – Jonathan Zimny