

# Jazzed

MARCH 2015

THE JAZZ MAGAZINE

\$4.99

## Miguel Zenón

Always Strive to Inspire

[jazzedmagazine.com](http://jazzedmagazine.com)

### FOCUS SESSION

Miles Davis –  
Genius Repeats Itself

### BASIC TRAINING

A Pianist's Touch –  
Approaches to Learning  
& Practicing Tunes

### THE LOST INTERVIEWS

Clark Terry

20

““ We never know what it is that we say or do that could profoundly inspire a student. ””

– Miguel Zenón

MARCH 2015

# contents

## **ROUNDTABLE:** **SETTING UP CAMP 12**

*JAZZed* spoke with representatives of a few summer jazz programs to find out why structured musical learning for students doesn't have to end when summer begins.

## **BASIC TRAINING:** **A PIANIST'S TOUCH 16**

New York- based pianist and composer Jason Yeager shares some approaches to learning, practicing, and mastering classic jazz repertoire.

## **SHOW REPORT:** **JAZZCONNECT 18**

Eugene Marlow recounts the events of the Third Annual JazzConnect conference in New York City.

## **SPOTLIGHT:** **MIGUEL ZENÓN 20**

With multiple Grammy nominations and accomplishments under his belt, Miguel Zenón spoke with *JAZZed* about growing up in San Juan, his passion for jazz, and his crusade to educate the younger generations.

## **THE LOST INTERVIEWS:** **CLARK TERRY 26**

This issue's installment of "Lost Interviews" from April of 2008 finds Dan Del Fiorentino speaking with the late, great Clark Terry.

## **ANNIVERSARY:** **BLUES ALLEY AT FIFTY 28**

Harry Schnipper, owner of Washington, D.C.'s Blues Alley, gave *JAZZed* a peek into the club's past, present, and future.

## **FOCUS SESSION:** **GENIUS REPEATS ITSELF 32**

Jazz guitarist, composer, and educator Matt Davis discusses the concept of artistic vision and helping students to successfully express themselves through the lens of Miles Davis.

# departments

**EDITOR'S LETTER 4**

**NOTEWORTHY 6**

**ELIANE ELIAS:**  
**What's on your playlist 10**

**JAZZ FORUM 31**

**HOT WAX 36**

**OUTLIER'S BLUES 40**

**GEARCHECK 41**

**CLASSIFIEDS 43**

**AD INDEX 43**

**BACKBEAT 44**

Cover photo by Jimmy Katz

JAZZed® Volume 10, Number 2, March 2015, is published six times annually by Timeless Communications Corp., 6000 South Eastern Ave., Suite 14-J, Las Vegas, NV 89119, (702) 479-1879, publisher of Musical Merchandise Review, School Band & Orchestra and Choral Director. Standard Mail Postage Paid at Las Vegas, NV and additional mailing offices. Subscriptions to JAZZed are available through our website, [www.jazzedmagazine.com/subscribe](http://www.jazzedmagazine.com/subscribe). JAZZed is distributed to the music trade by Hal Leonard Corporation. POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS. NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: send address corrections to JAZZed, PO Box 16655, North Hollywood, CA 91615-6655. The publishers of this magazine do not accept responsibility for statements made by their advertisers in business competition. No portion of this issue may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Copyright © 2015 by Timeless Communications Corp., all rights reserved. Printed in USA.

# At-Risk

Antonio Morales was born in the second largest housing projects in the U.S. – the Residencial Luis Llorens Torres in San Juan, Puerto Rico – also known as el Caserío. His dad was a drug lord in their intimate, yet violent world consisting of 140 buildings and about 2,600 units, and his mom was one of its drug addicts.



As a boy, Morales would find guns in the closet and drugs under the mattresses, but at 15, he found the arts. Morales had passed a competitive audition to attend the Jose Julian Acosta Theatre Arts Middle and High School in Old San Juan, and that was his one-way ticket out of his violent past.

The above is from an NBC report that aired in November of 2011. The story goes on to explain how a passion for theatre led Morales to a successful career as a writer and producer, now owning his own theatre group and involved with successful performance tours and film projects.

Change the names, the family details, and shift the timeline, and the story is remarkably similar to that of this issue's cover subject, Miguel Zenón. Like Morales, Zenón grew up in Luis Llorens Torres and, again just like Morales, Miguel's artistic interests were further reinforced and encouraged by admission to a competitive performing arts middle school, places where both boys discovered escape, safety, and purpose through honing their skills and knowledge in their respective fields.

Most of us listen to, perform, and study music primarily for the pure enjoyment of such activities. Sure, there are those of whom it could be said (or who feel no shame in saying so of themselves), "He (or "she" or "I") had to play! It was in his (her/my) blood – he couldn't live without music." Sure, I get it. Music and the arts mean a lot to a great many people and, to some, it can feel as if it "means everything." But to some others, a pursuit of music or the arts really can mean the difference between a life defined by violence, poverty, and fear or one filled with positivity, purpose, and direction.

The point isn't a new one, nor is its application limited to either Puerto Rico or jazz, or the theatre. Such an important point, though, can never be repeated too often.

A 2001 study of music education and its impact on at-risk urban adolescents that appeared in *Journal of Research in Music Education* noted that, "A correlation emerged between students' self-perceptions of musical competence and global self-worth, suggesting that musical competency is related to, but not synonymous with, global self-worth."

That's probably obvious to anyone reading this – if a person has a skill, that person is apt to think more highly of him or herself. Did we need a formal study to tell us that? But think about the implications for kids in those "at-risk" situations. For an adolescent having a difficult time transitioning into adulthood, finding a sense of self worth through musical achievement could be the determining factor behind that child choosing to embark on a journey that leads to economic self-sufficiency and emotional expression, rather than a path of truancy, drugs, violence, incarceration, poverty...

Again, I fully acknowledge that I'm not breaking new ground here and that I'm preaching to the choir. But when learning of Miguel Zenón's own background, I couldn't help but be reminded of the powerfully positive impact music can have on individuals and felt that was worth sharing with JAZZed readers – because many of you are in positions to possibly help bring that positive impact into the lives of young people who need it desperately. I applaud your achievements and encourage you to never stop trying to do even more.



March 2015  
Volume 10, Number 2

PRESIDENT Terry Lowe  
tlowe@timelesscom.com

GROUP PUBLISHER John Pledger  
jpledger@timelesscom.com

### Editorial

EXECUTIVE EDITOR Christian Wissmuller  
cwissmuller@timelesscom.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR Paige Tutt  
ptutt@timelesscom.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR Mike Lawson  
mlawson@timelesscom.com

### Art

ART DIRECTOR Garret Petrov  
gpetrov@timelesscom.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER Mike Street  
mstreet@timelesscom.com

GRAPHIC DESIGNER Angela Marlett  
amarlett@timelesscom.com

### Advertising

ACCOUNT MANAGER Matt King  
mking@timelesscom.com

ACCOUNT MANAGER Dave Jeans  
djeans@timelesscom.com

ACCOUNT MANAGER Robb Holzrichter  
robb@timelesscom.com

GREATER CHINA  
Judy Wang  
Worldwide Focus Media  
C: 0086-13810325171  
E: judy@timelesscom.com

CLASSIFIED SALES Erin Schroeder  
erin@timelesscom.com

### Business

VICE PRESIDENT William Hamilton Vanyo  
wvanyo@timelesscom.com

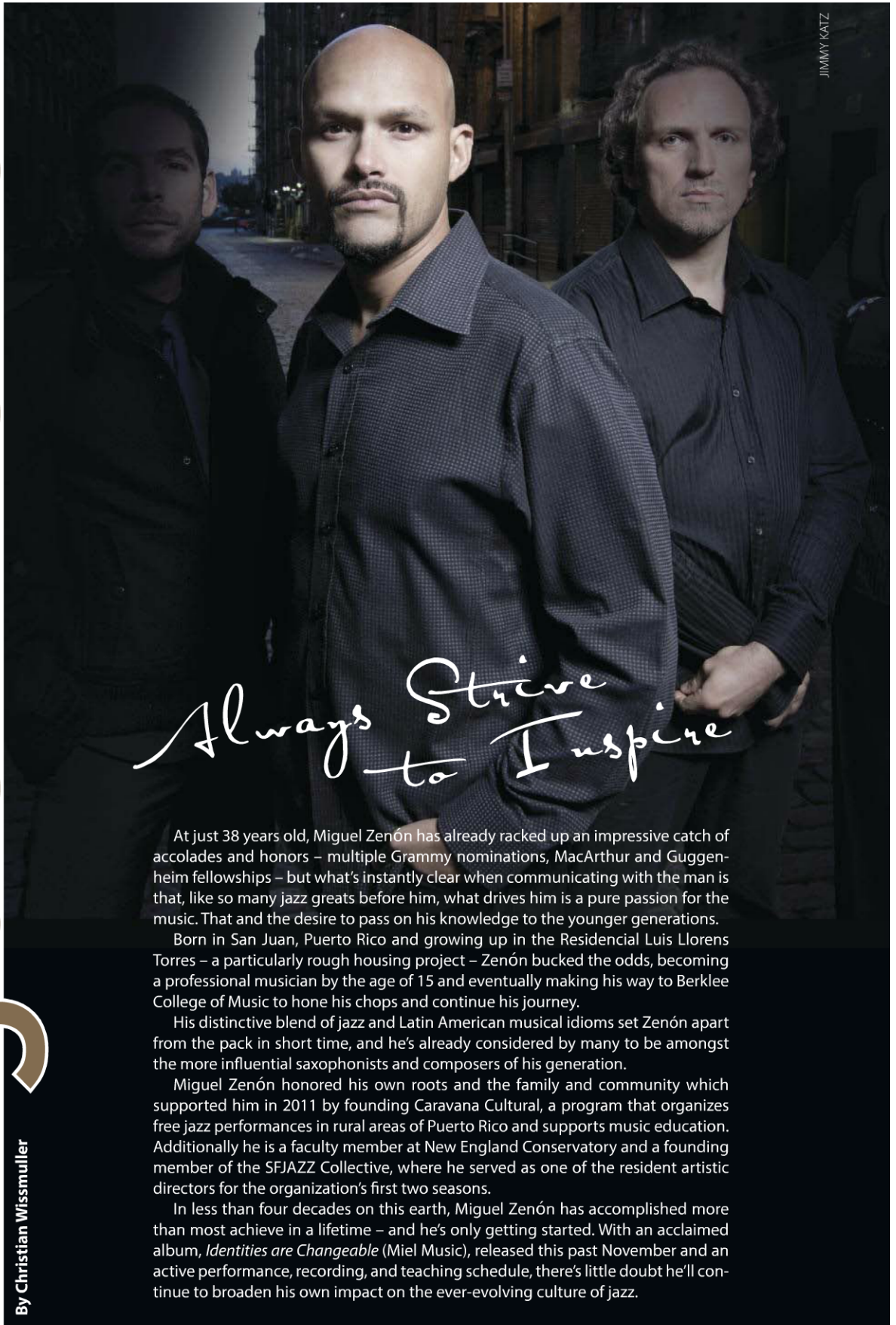
CIRCULATION MANAGER Erin Schroeder  
erin@timelesscom.com

6000 South Eastern Ave., #14-J  
Las Vegas, NV 89119  
702-479-1879  
Fax: 702-554-5340



# Miguel Zenón

By Christian Wissmuller



JIMMY KATZ

*Always Strive  
to Inspire*

At just 38 years old, Miguel Zenón has already racked up an impressive catch of accolades and honors – multiple Grammy nominations, MacArthur and Guggenheim fellowships – but what’s instantly clear when communicating with the man is that, like so many jazz greats before him, what drives him is a pure passion for the music. That and the desire to pass on his knowledge to the younger generations.

Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico and growing up in the Residencial Luis Llorens Torres – a particularly rough housing project – Zenón bucked the odds, becoming a professional musician by the age of 15 and eventually making his way to Berklee College of Music to hone his chops and continue his journey.

His distinctive blend of jazz and Latin American musical idioms set Zenón apart from the pack in short time, and he’s already considered by many to be amongst the more influential saxophonists and composers of his generation.

Miguel Zenón honored his own roots and the family and community which supported him in 2011 by founding Caravana Cultural, a program that organizes free jazz performances in rural areas of Puerto Rico and supports music education. Additionally he is a faculty member at New England Conservatory and a founding member of the SFJAZZ Collective, where he served as one of the resident artistic directors for the organization’s first two seasons.

In less than four decades on this earth, Miguel Zenón has accomplished more than most achieve in a lifetime – and he’s only getting started. With an acclaimed album, *Identities are Changeable* (Miel Music), released this past November and an active performance, recording, and teaching schedule, there’s little doubt he’ll continue to broaden his own impact on the ever-evolving culture of jazz.



**JAZZed:** Miguel, can you talk about your early exposure to music? What first grabbed you from the beginning – about your interest in saxophone, specifically, but also music, in general?

**Miguel Zenón:** Like in most places in Latin America, music is part of everyday life in Puerto Rico, so I grew up around a lot of music. My mom was always playing music at home, singing stuff, et cetera. I didn't grow up around any musicians, per se, but I had a great-uncle who played bass, plus my father played a little hand percussion and even some steel pans. I never saw either of them play, but it was definitely in the air. So, I was attracted to music early on – not in a serious way, but more like you would be attracted to a game or something like that. I just enjoyed being around music. In elementary school there was a choir and a sort of "recorder ensemble," and I was part of that for a few years and enjoyed it very much. Around that time some of my classmates mentioned a gentleman by the name of Ernesto Vigoreaux. He would come into my neighborhood a few times a week and teach solfege and music theory to kids for free. I grew in a "Residencial" (the equivalent in the U.S. to a "Project Development") in San Juan called "Luis Llorens Torres." This was – and still is – a very rough neighborhood, so the fact that Mr. Vigoreaux did this in the twilight of his life – he was in his 70s when I met him – and for free meant a lot to someone like me. Anyway, when I was about 10 years old I had my grandmother bring me over and I studied with him for a few months. He taught me how to read music and the basics of the saxophone. The idea was that you would study with him for a while, until he felt you were a proficient reader, and then he would have you pick an instrument and join the neighborhood's marching band. As it happens, I never joined that band because at that same time I was admitted into a performing arts middle school-high school, Escuela Libre de Música, and moved to a different neighborhood, Villa Palmeras.

I attended that school for six years and received my first "formal" musical instruction there. It was a really important period of my life, because I was surrounded by a lot of young people like me – I guess you could call it "musically inclined" – and I made a point of taking advantage of the opportunity. All my instruction there was classical, but we had a "Dance Band," a saxophone quartet, woodwind ensemble, and so on.

**Other than Mr. Vigoreaux, who were some early instructors who had a lasting impact on your approach to playing and studying music? What about them resonated with you as a young music student?**

In Puerto Rico it was definitely my first saxophone teacher, Angel Marrero. Not only did he literally buy me my first mouthpiece with money out of his own pocket, but he was extremely supportive and encouraging in every way. Plus he was an amazing teacher – strict but always with a purpose. His words always seemed to have a lesson behind them. There were a few other instructors at Escuela Libre that had a profound effect on me, such as Leslie Lopez and Rafael Martínez. Both made sure that I was on the right path and doing what I needed to be doing.

**At what age did you develop a serious interest in jazz? Who – or what – was the catalyst?**

I started playing professionally at around age 15 or so. Playing dance music mostly, Salsa and Merenge plus some traditional music from Puerto Rico. Even at that age, music was still sort of a game

to me – I wasn't taking it too seriously yet, just kind of enjoying the ride. At around this time a couple of friends from the "Dance Band" at school started talking about jazz and passing around tapes. I remember very vividly how they were talking about Charlie Parker and about how this guy had crazy technique. When I finally heard Bird for the first time this was exactly the first thing that blew me away, just the amazing control he had on the instrument and his incredible technique and sound. But when I realized that he was mostly improvising, that was it. That was the catalyst. Improvisation is obviously not exclusive of jazz and I had been exposed to it a little bit, but not at this level. What I was getting from this music was improvisation filtered through a very sophisticated musical language and a very

**“ My time in college provided me with very important tools, but they would have meant absolutely nothing without that experience of just getting out there and playing. ”**

unique musical balance between something that was heartfelt and intellectual at the same time. I became obsessed with understanding what these musicians were doing and it changed the way I felt about music forever.

**Can you talk about your time at both Berklee and Manhattan School of Music? Why did you decide to attend each school and were there any professors, in particular, who you really connected with?**

After I decided that I wanted to pursue musical studies further – which, as you can imagine, was not an easy decision for my family or myself – I set my sights on Berklee. Mainly because it seemed at the time to be "the place" to study jazz, but also because studying jazz in Puerto Rico was not an option. None of the colleges or conservatories there taught it formally at the time. My family couldn't help me financially and I didn't have a lot of options. So, after graduating high school, I stayed in Puerto Rico for about a year and a half, playing around and saving money. Eventually I was able to gather enough funds through scholarships and savings to make it to Boston and enroll at Berklee. My time there was really important for me – It was my first exposure to any kind of formal jazz education (jazz harmony, jazz history, et cetera) since everything I knew about jazz up to that point I had learned on my own. Plus, I found myself surrounded by a lot of people my age, all of them eager to learn and get better. Most of them were much better versed in the jazz language than I was, so it forced me to play catch up and learn quickly. In all, my experience there couldn't have been more positive. I got to spend time with a lot of good instructors there, but if I had to mention a few it would be Bill Pierce, who was my main saxophone teacher there, Hal Crook, and Ed Tomassi. All of them helped me tremendously, especially in terms of identifying my weaknesses and focusing on getting better.

After graduating from Berklee I was kind of a loss in terms of what I wanted to do next. A lot of people suggested moving to New York, which kind of made sense to me because I have some family there. But I felt a little uncomfortable about moving to New York with no specific musical agenda. Going back to Puerto Rico was another op-

## spotlight | MIGUEL ZENÓN

tion. I eventually decided that I would apply to a couple of graduate programs in New York and see how it went. At least that way I would be able to be in the city while pursuing something concrete. Manhattan School was my first option and I was able to get a good scholarship from them, so I took that route. The main reason why I wanted to go there was because of Dick Oatts. I got the chance to study with him there for two years and it was extremely helpful. He had a very relaxed approach to teaching, but extremely personal. We spent a lot of time playing in class and talking about various aspects of the creative process. He was also one of the first individuals that got me to think seriously about sound. Through Dick I started getting some playing time in some of the best bands in town (Village Vanguard Orchestra, Carnegie Hall Big Band, Mingus Big Band) and got a lot of experience that way. Another thing that was great about MSM – which might be a bit different now, I'm not sure – was that I got the chance to take some courses from the classical department, which really opened my ears in terms of the music I was writing. An analysis class on 20<sup>th</sup> Century music by Niels Vigeland is especially memorable for me.

**Within the pages of *JAZZed* we often discuss the differences between traditional classroom learning and “learning by doing,” via performing and recording alongside more established and older players. What’s your take?**

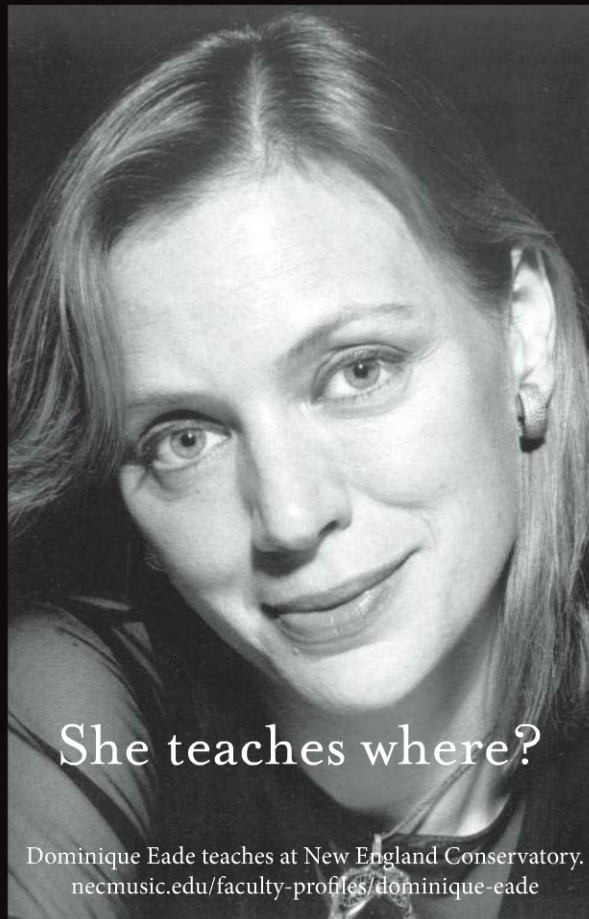
Obviously the more formal, “classroom” type of education was crucial for me in terms of studying jazz music specifically, because I had so much to learn and so many holes that I couldn’t identify and address on my own. Having someone there to guide me through the process was very helpful.

Having said that, I believe that, because of the collective nature of this music, nothing can replace the experience you can get from more seasoned players or from just getting to play on a consistent basis and figuring stuff out on stage, paying attention, and learning from your mistakes. My time in college provided me with very important tools, but they would have meant absolutely nothing without that experience of just getting out there and playing.

They were both crucial to my development, but “learning by doing” probably had a bit more to do with it. There are just certain things that you learn through that process that would be hard to learn in a classroom environment.

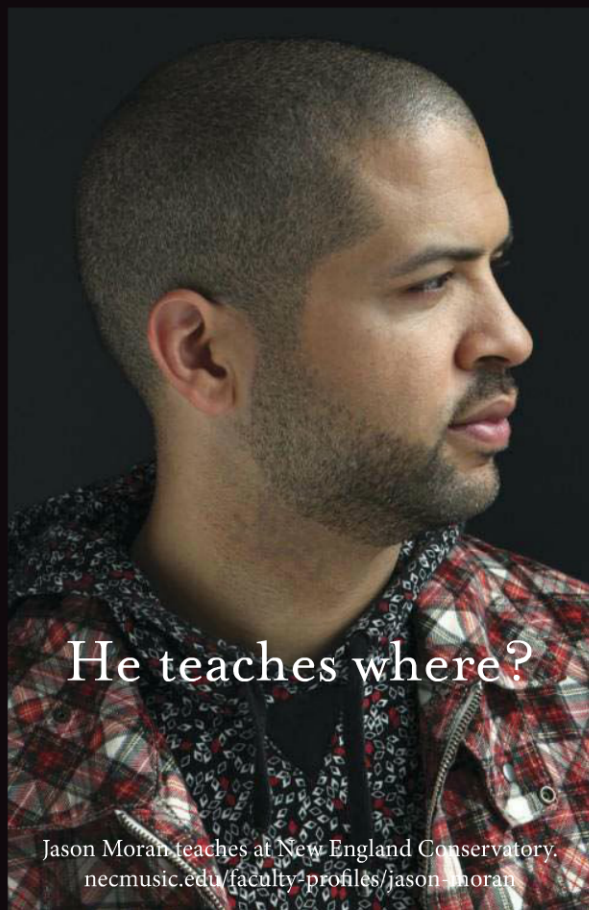
**Your own music and playing is notable for your deft combination of traditional and contemporary jazz with Latin musical styles. Is this a byproduct of a conscious decision on your part, or simply a natural expression of the musical influences you’ve experienced?**

It’s probably a little of both. After going through college and basically immersing myself in jazz for various years, I realized that I had never approached studying my own musical roots from a musician’s perspective. I grew around a lot of sounds that are very familiar to me, but I couldn’t really pinpoint what those sounds were or describe them musically. So, I sort of made it a project of mine to go deeper into Puerto Rican music and culture, and into the music of culture of Latin America in general, and seeing how I could find elements there that could speak to me musically. The more I researched, the more natural it felt and lot of those ideas started finding their way into the music I was writing and eventually became projects of their own. I’m still working out the



She teaches where?

Dominique Eade teaches at New England Conservatory.  
[necmusic.edu/faculty-profiles/dominique-eade](http://necmusic.edu/faculty-profiles/dominique-eade)



He teaches where?

Jason Moran teaches at New England Conservatory.  
[necmusic.edu/faculty-profiles/jason-moran](http://necmusic.edu/faculty-profiles/jason-moran)



process and there's a long road ahead of me, but it feels like I'm on the right track.

**Let's discuss your work with SFJAZZ. What was your involvement in the group's foundation and what's your current role?**

I've been working with the SFJAZZ Collective since its inception, in 2004, and I'm the only remaining original member of the ensemble. Working with SFJAZZ and The Collective is probably one of the most meaningful musical experiences of my life. Not only have I gotten to play with some of my musical heroes, but I've gotten to be part of what I think is a very unique ensemble. There's no leader or musical director – instead we all share that load at various points and depending on the situation. Also, we get to write new music every year and spend a lot of time rehearsing, so we can take chances as composers that we wouldn't be able to take in other situations. It's really a great thing to be a part of.

SFJAZZ inaugurated the SFJAZZ Center in the spring of 2013 and I served as one of the resident artistic directors, along with Jason Moran, Regina Carter, Bill Frisell, and John Santos, for its first two seasons.

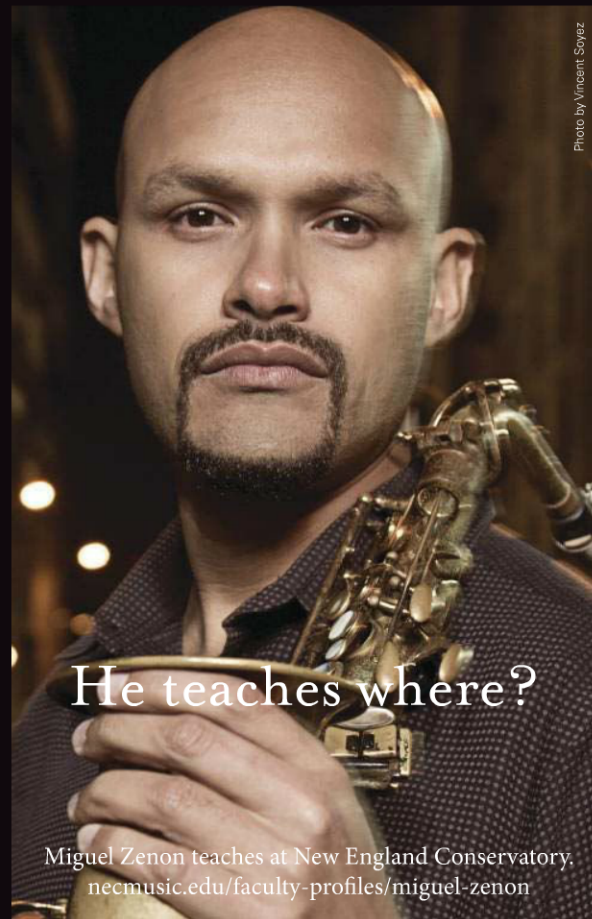


Miguel performing live at NYC's Jazz Standard.

**What does your current role at New England Conservatory entail and what do you like about teaching at NEC?**

I'm part of the Jazz Faculty at NEC, have been there for about four years now, and I'm very happy there. My schedule is very limited, so I can only take about six students per semester, with whom I meet with seven times each semester. I work with students of all instruments, both undergrad and graduate.

The level of the students at NEC is probably the highest I've encountered as a teacher. For the most part they're very focused and hard working. I think my favorite thing about this specific situation is that I get to deal with each student independently and according to their specific needs. So I don't go in with a pre-set curriculum, but instead try to react to what the students feels he or she wants to work on and what I feel he or she should be working on in order to get better.



**He teaches where?**

Miguel Zenon teaches at New England Conservatory.  
[necmusic.edu/faculty-profiles/miguel-zenon](http://necmusic.edu/faculty-profiles/miguel-zenon)

**That's right. NEC.**

At NEC you'll study with jazz greats,  
in a program like no other.

NEC jazz faculty don't tell you how to sound. You'll study with more than one teacher, have diverse influences, take risks, and collaborate with some of the world's best young musicians. Develop your artistic voice in a place steeped in over forty years of trailblazing. The first conservatory to grant jazz degrees in the U.S.? That's right. NEC.

Want more names? Jerry Bergonzi, Donny McCaslin, Ralph Alessi, John McNeil, Luis Bonilla, Joe Morris, Brad Shepik, Ran Blake, Dave Holland, John Lockwood, Cecil McBee, Billy Hart, Rakalam Bob Moses, Dominique Eade.

Want more info? Follow the link!



[necmusic.edu/jazz-studies](http://necmusic.edu/jazz-studies)



**SAX DAKOTA**  
**XR TYPE**

AMONG ALL SAXOPHONES  
THIS XR TYPE IS UNMISTAKABLE

From the familiar/unique key guard grills to the subtle Bronze colorations throughout... coupled with precision-crafted "low profile" thin key cups and extensive hand-engraved European style fleurets... here is truly a stylish Saxophone that out-performs all others on the market.

**...Stainless Steel rods guarantee fastest key response...**

**...Thinner Italian choice leather pads assure complete tone hole closure...**

**...Bronze alloy that produced legacy European saxophones in the '30s...**

**...Bell taper and size that provide optimum intonation and sound projection...**

This isn't a Faux Vintage saxophone based on today's standards. This is the real thing... we're going "Back to the Future" to give you today's new benchmark of Saxophone excellence.

**DAKOTA** [www.saxdakota.com](http://www.saxdakota.com)  
pjlabiz2@aol.com

What were your goals in establishing Caravana Cultural and what do you currently do with that program?

Caravana Cultural is a program that I started in 2011. We organize free-of-charge jazz concerts in the rural areas of Puerto Rico, where audiences don't get a lot of new cultural experiences, let alone jazz concerts. Each concert is centered around a historic jazz figure – Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, for example – and is preceded by a pre-concert talk where we talk about the principles of improvisation and about the life and music of the artist whose music we'll feature during the concert. We do these talks in order to provide these audiences, who are mostly new to jazz, with a point of reference to what they'll experience during the concert.

**“ We never know what it is that we say or do that could profoundly inspire a student. ”**

For each concert we also incorporate a group of young musicians from the community who are chosen and prepared beforehand, who join us for the final piece of the concert. This year we're planning to incorporate a scholarship, which will provide a chosen young student with funds for instruments and lessons. We've organized nine concerts so far and plan on having our next one in June of this year.

One of the main purposes of this project is, of course, to expand the jazz audience on the island and to try to dissolve the notion (very present in Puerto Rico) that this music is for a specific group of people and can't really be enjoyed by anyone. But our main objective is to support the idea that culture and cultural activity should be an integral part of any society and that it should be available to all.

As an educator, what formats do you prefer – master classes, lectures, private lessons, classroom instruction – and why?

They all have pros and cons, but one-on-one private lessons is the method I would prefer. It's just easier for me to work out the individual issues of each student and give it the time it deserves when dealing with them one-on-one.



What do you find most rewarding about teaching?

Identifying a musical deficiency of a student and being able to help him or her overcome it.

Most frustrating?

When a student believes that talent can get them farther than hard work.

Any words of advice to your fellow jazz educators?

I would be very hesitant to give any advice, since there are some many colleagues out there with so much more experience than me. But there is something I've been thinking about lately, and it's the fact that we never know what it is that we say or do that could profoundly inspire a student. We all had that moment that provided that spark, that thing someone said or did that pushed us over the edge and made us want to carry on. So, I feel that is important for us to never lose sight of that and always strive to inspire.



**STUDENT JAZZ FESTIVAL SUMMER TOURS**

Umbria Jazz Festival in Italy • Vitoria Gasteiz in Spain  
Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland • Jazzaldia in Spain  
Jazz à Juan on the French Riviera • Jazz à Vienne in France  
Netherlands North Sea Jazz Festival • Istanbul Jazz Festival

**PERFORM AT MAJOR FESTIVALS IN EUROPE**

Your students will perform before large & enthusiastic audiences!

**CULTURAL TOUR CONSULTANTS**

Contact us for Details Today! TOLL FREE (866) 499-3799 [CulturalTourConsultants.com](http://CulturalTourConsultants.com)



**JAZZ**  
DOES NOT BELONG  
TO ONE RACE OR CULTURE  
**BUT IS A GIFT**  
THAT AMERICA HAS GIVEN THE WORLD

**THIS IS OUR GIFT BACK**



P. Mauriat Saxophones and Trumpets are available through the finest instrument retailers. To find one near you visit [www.pmauriatmusic.com](http://www.pmauriatmusic.com).



St. Louis Music is the exclusive distributor of P. Mauriat in North America. To find out more visit [www.stlouismusic.com](http://www.stlouismusic.com)