



# Jazz Aid Fund 2024

**San Jose Jazz Grants \$130,000 to Local Musicians  
From Four Consecutive Years of Giving Through the SJZ Jazz Aid Fund**

**San Jose Jazz Board of Directors Announce Its Latest Funding Round of \$1,000 Grants for  
Commissioning of Works by 20 SF Bay Area Musicians with SJZ Jazz Aid Fund 2024**

**2024 Grantees:**

**Dahveed Behroozi • Ayo Brame • Kelyn Crapp • Chika Di • Uriah Duffy • Kia Fay  
Aki Kumar • Grant Levin • Steven Lugerner • Sundra Manning • Marcelo Manriquez  
Ami Molinelli • RyanNicole • Lidia Rodriguez • Marcus Shelby • Scott Sorkin  
Zavia Valentina • Hristo Vitchev • Brandon Walters • John L. Worley, Jr.**

“This is amazing news, and just what I needed to boost my spirits in these difficult times. THANK YOU.”

–RyanNicole (SJZ Jazz Aid Fund, 2024 Grantee)

“By selecting me, SJZ gave me new creative life, in a sense. Attending the gala and later participating in the voting further reminded me that I am part of a community, something I sort of forgot.” –Michelle Pollace (SJZ Jazz Aid Fund, 2023 Grantee)

“Thank you so deeply for this gift, I am truly grateful. Looking forward to creating something with a place that feels like home, San Jose and SJZ.” –Lidia Rodriguez (SJZ Jazz Aid Fund, 2024 Grantee)

**San Jose, Calif. – Tuesday, November 15, 2023 – San Jose Jazz Board of Directors** announces today a new round of funding providing \$20,000 for individual grants of \$1,000 per artist to 20 SF Bay Area musicians with its continuing commissions-based initiative, the **SJZ Jazz Aid Fund 2024**. To date, San Jose Jazz has granted \$100,000 in artist commissions and \$30,000 in performance fees since its launch in 2020. SJZ Jazz Aid Fund gives \$1,000 grants to a diverse cross-section of artists to provide them with direct financial support, connect them with new audiences and to stimulate the creation of new work.

In Spring 2024, six of the 20 new grantees will premiere their commissions live in a series of shows at the **SJZ Break Room** in downtown San Jose in February and March, part of a Winter Series at the venue.

Executive Director Brendan Rawson said, “Originating because of the pandemic-rooted performing arts work stoppages, we are thrilled that our San Jose Jazz Board of Directors continues its steadfast commitment to supporting local musicians and their creation of new music. This cohort of 2024 JAF awardees reflects the wonderful breadth of musicians creating great work here in the Bay Area.”

Building on a lead gift by Jan DeCarli, the Board of Directors launched the SJZ Jazz Aid Fund in 2020 in direct response to the COVID pandemic with artists being among those most adversely affected with the unprecedented cancellation of live concerts, tours, and limited income-generating activities. \$33,000 was donated through 33 individual grants during the initial 2021 funding round. For 2022, 27 standout musicians received grants. In 2023, 20 musicians received support and in 2024, an additional 20 artists will receive \$1,000 grants. Across the three consecutive years, \$30,000 in performance fees have been granted for select grantees appearing at the **SJZ New Works Fest** (2021 – 2024). For each round of funding, grantees are selected by a panel, from recommendations from those across the SF Bay Area music community, including media critics, arts presenters, artists and curators.

### **Artist Highlights – SJZ Jazz Aid Fund 2024**

#### **Dahveed Behroozi**

Pianist and Composer Dahveed Behroozi is a San Jose-based musician focusing on jazz, classical and new music. He is an active player both as a leader and sideman in the Bay Area, nationally and internationally. Behroozi's expansive musical palette comes from a wide array of places that almost seem endless. His musical frame of reference ranges from Bach, Brahms, Schoenberg, Alban Berg and 20th century jazz luminaries, as well as the rock and ambient worlds. Currently, he serves on the music faculty at Gavilan College as well as San Jose State University.

<https://dahveedbehroozimusic.com/>

#### **Ayo Brame**

Ayo Brame is a 16-year-old up-and-coming tenor saxophone jazz musician out of Oakland, California. He is a student of jazz great Richard Howell by way of Oaktown Jazz Workshops. He considers himself a purist when it comes to jazz, and he is inspired by late greats such as John Coltrane and Wayne Shorter. Embraced by the jazz community, he has been very lucky in acquiring additional mentors that influence and challenge him on a regular basis like Kev Choice, Ayinde Webb, Stacy Dillard, Stabe Wilson, Marcus Shelby and Eric Wyatt.

<https://ayobrame.com/>

#### **Kelyn Crapp**

San Francisco-based Kelyn Crapp graduated from the University of North Texas in Denton with a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Guitar Performance. He has played professionally since the age of 16, touring internationally and performing with Lucky Peterson, Wynton Marsalis, Archie Shepp, Bernie Worrell, Dolly Parton, Stanley Clarke, Snarky Puppy, Herlin Riley, Robert Randolph, the Skatalites and Emily King.

<https://www.instagram.com/kelyncrapp>

#### **Chika Di**

Diana Trujillo, known as "Chika Di," is a rising star who blends traditional Latin, electronic, afro and pop with powerful Colombian vocals. She has credits on the hit TV shows *Euphoria* and *Generation*, and her debut album is set to release in 2023. Diana was born and raised in Medellin, Colombia. At age 12, she became deeply involved in music, joining the Corporación Cultural Canchimalos, which gave her the opportunity to travel the country performing traditional Colombian music. By her mid-teens she was performing with rock bands in Medellin and, by the age of 19, she immigrated to the SF Bay Area where she found herself singing with various salsa bands. Chika Di was featured on the 2024 SJZ Summer Fest Latin Tropical Stage.

<https://www.chikaditrujillo.com/>

### **Uriah Duffy**

Hailing from Rhode Island, Uriah cut most of his musical chops in the Oakland area. Many recognize him as the former bassist of the legendary rock group Whitesnake, but his accomplishments go much further, into the realm of session and live bass work and band direction. He's worked and traveled with some of the most respected musicians in the world including Christina Aguilera, The Family Stone, Ledisi, Liv Warfield, Fantastic Negrito, Prince, Starship, Too \$hort, The Coup, Steve Stevens, Marvel Comics, Points North and more.

<https://udawggy.wixsite.com/uriah>

### **Kia Fay**

With a magnetic stage presence and a voice that transcends boundaries, Kia Fay infuses all of her projects with soulful authenticity. Her resonant and versatile alto voice lends itself to a diverse array of musical genres, always remaining grounded in jazz-hued tones. Kia has been a fixture on the Bay Area jazz scene for nearly two decades, providing vocals for projects such as Ghost & The City and Parentz. Her musical endeavors have been recognized in *Afropunk*, *Wired Magazine*, *Content Magazine*, and *SFGate*. Kia has opened for acclaimed artists like Hiatus Kiyote, Shabazz Palaces, The Comet Is Coming and Michael McDonald.

<https://www.instagram.com/heymisskia>

### **Aki Kumar**

Aki Kumar left his native home in Mumbai, India for the United States with the intention of working as a software engineer. Then he discovered the sounds of the blues, and his life changed forever. One of the hardest working artists on the music scene today, this San Jose-based musician has successfully blended elements of Indian music into his sound creating a highly personal, multi-cultural mash-up that never loses touch with the blues. He has been featured on PRI's *The World*, has made multiple appearances at San Jose Jazz Summer Fest and The Hardly Strictly Bluegrass festival and has toured in Russia, Scandinavia and South America.

<https://www.akikumar.com/>

### **Grant Levin**

A jazz pianist and composer based in San Francisco, Grant Levin has performed at notable venues such as the SFJAZZ Center, Mildred Owen Concert Hall, Yoshi's and Cafe Stritch. He has also appeared at San Jose Jazz Summer Fest, Fillmore Jazz Festival and jazz festivals in Stanford, Cotati and Benicia.

<https://grantlevin.com/>

### **Steven Lugerner**

Steven Lugerner is a multi-instrumentalist and composer based in San Francisco. As a bandleader, Lugerner leads both SLUGish Ensemble, an amoeba-like ensemble dedicated to original compositions and arrangements, and JACKKNIFE, a hard-hitting post-bop quintet dedicated to the music of late alto saxophonist Jackie McLean. Since 2010, Lugerner has released twelve albums to critical acclaim. *The New York Times* calls him "an impeccably trained multi-reedist." The San Francisco Examiner says, "Lugerner's approach to making music is very much his own." Steven is the director of educational and festival programming at the Stanford Jazz Workshop. He is also the founder of Slow & Steady Records, a non-profit record label dedicated to showcasing up-and-coming creative artists on the West Coast.

<https://www.stevenlugerner.com/>

### **Sundra Manning**

Sundra Manning is a Grammy Award nominated pianist, Hammond B3 Organ Player and producer. Respected for her musical versatility, she has recorded, written and performed around the world with artists including Larry Graham with Prince, Sheila E., Lalah Hathaway, Raphael Saadiq, Peter Dinklage of The Monkees, Bobby Womack, Meshell Ndegeocello, Ledisi, Michael Franti and Spearhead, MC Hammer, Walter Hawkins' Love Center Youth Ministry, Jody Watley, Jubu & Legally Blynd, The Braxton Brothers, Martin Luther, Peabo Bryson, Maysa Leaks, Pete Escovedo, Miguel Migs, En Vogue, Avery Sunshine, Aneesa Strings, Nona Hendryx and Black Women Rock, sharing her gift of music.

<https://www.reverbnation.com/sundramanning>

### **Marcelo Manriquez**

Originally from Watsonville, Marcelo Manriquez is a Mexican-American bassist, guitarist and composer, deeply influenced by Latin and Brazilian music. Growing up in a household where jazz, choro, pagode and Brazilian popular music were constantly playing, falling in love with music was inevitable. Having gone through programs at Cabrillo College, UC Berkeley, California Jazz Conservatory and California Brazil Camp, Marcelo has studied with mentors such as Ricardo Peixoto, Chico Pinheiro, Kai Eckhardt, Myra Melford, Ray Brown, Frank Martin, Ted Moore, Stan Poplin and Marcos Silva.

<https://www.youtube.com/@marcelomanriquez4344>

### **Ami Molinelli**

Ami Molinelli is an American musician and educator specializing in American, Brazilian and Latin percussion. Ami received her Master of Fine Arts from the California Institute of the Arts. Her performance and recording credits include theater and television (NBC). She is endorsed by Latin Percussion (LP) and Rhythm Tech. Her last album, *História do Choro* with Duo Violão Brasil + 1 was released in 2019 and celebrated as one of the best jazz albums from the Bay Area for that year. (*Mercury News*) She is a 2018 and 2020 San Francisco Arts Commission Individual Artist Recipient.

<https://www.instagram.com/amimolinellisf>

### **Lidia Rodriguez**

Lidia Rodriguez is a Bay Area multi-instrumentalist playing everything from flute to baritone sax, and a few more in between. She plays an extensive range of genres in bands all over California. With an early background in playing for wind ensembles, orchestras, musicals, jazz bands, and salsa bands, Lidia uses her many woodwind skills to break the mold and play with more experimental and avant-garde collaborations. She has played on albums with the SF Native Marinero, the ethereal singer Spelling and scored flute for Poet Yosimar Reyes with the Discos Resaca Collective. She is a member of the band La Misa Negra and rocks stages with electronic group Madame Gandhi. She has also been an instructor in San Jose Jazz's Progressions music education program at schools in the Franklin-McKinley School District.

<https://www.instagram.com/lidiapeacelovesax>

### **RyanNicole**

RyanNicole is a multi-hyphenate creative and Rainin Fellow who has been featured on Alphabet Rockers' Grammy nominated album *The Love*, at TEDx San Francisco and on ESPN's *NBA Christmas* with Daveed Diggs. The California State Assembly-recognized artist was executive director of Youth Movement Records. As a playwright, RyanNicole has been commissioned by the American Conservatory Theater, New York's Public Theater, National Performance Network and National American Musical Theater Festival. She is a proud Oakland native where she resides with her husband and two children.

<https://www.msryannicole.com/>

### **Marcus Shelby**

Marcus Anthony Shelby is a highly-lauded composer, bassist, bandleader and educator who currently lives in San Francisco, California. His work focuses on the history, present and future of African American lives, social movements and music education. In 1990, Marcus Shelby received the Charles Mingus Scholarship to attend Cal Arts and study composition with James Newton and bass with Charlie Haden. Currently, Shelby is the Artistic Director of Healdsburg Jazz, an artist in residence with the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival, and a past resident artist with the San Francisco Jazz Festival.

<https://marcusshelby.com/>

### **Scott Sorkin**

Scott Sorkin is a Bay Area guitarist, composer, producer, teacher, clinician and recording engineer who performs and records in styles ranging from jazz and Brazilian to latin and American roots music. Scott is on the music faculty of Chabot College in Hayward, CA, and has been a clinician for the Stanford Jazz Workshop, San Jose Jazz Summer Camp, Stanford University, San Jose State University, Mission College, Kuumbwa Jazz Center, The Siskiyou Institute, Selkirk College, Los Gatos Music & Arts and The Mountain View Community School of Music & Arts. He is also a co-founder of the South Bay Summer Jazz Intensive.

<https://www.scottsorkin.com/>

**Zavia Valentina**

From Chile to Canada and California, Zavia Valentina brings music that blends all of her favorite influences together including bossa nova, jazz, Argentinian folk and R&B. Coming out of a five-year long hiatus from music, her spiritual journey led her right back to her first love, music. With twelve new unreleased originals that speak to trauma, mental-health, lived experience and life as the beautiful struggle that it is, Zavia Valentina is excited to once again share her voice with her community.

<https://www.instagram.com/zaviavalentina/>

**Hristo Vitchev**

Referred by the media as one of the newest and most innovative voices in modern jazz guitar and voted Rising Star on Guitar by *DownBeat* Magazine, Hristo Vitchev's music has been captivating audiences all across the globe. At age 42, he has already released ten critically-acclaimed albums as a leader, four releases as a co-leader and more than 240 books and studies on modern jazz guitar concepts. Originally from Bulgaria, but now based in the San Francisco Bay Area, the impressionistic guitarist combines elements of classical, modern jazz, folk and the avant-garde in his music. Hristo has twice toured Asia as a member of the SJZ Collective.

<https://hristovitchev.com/en/>

**John L. Worley, Jr.**

San Jose-based John L. Worley, Jr. is a Yamaha trumpet/flugelhorn artist and leader of the Mo-Chi Ensemble. John has played in many of the Bay Area's leading ensembles, as well as on over 80 recordings and videos. Being adept at a multitude of styles, John has played with and backed up national and international artists in North America, Asia, Europe, and Central America such as SJZ Collective on its 2018 and 2019 Asia Tours; Gregory Porter; Jamie Davis; Ella Fitzgerald; Don Byron; Wayne Shorter with the Monterey Jazz Festival Chamber Orchestra; Carla Bley and Steve Swallow Big Band; Seth McFarlane and the San Francisco Symphony; Wayne Wallace; Jon Jang and the Pan Asian Arkestra; Dave Pell Octet; Pete and Sheila Escovedo, Lila Downs and many others. John has also twice toured Asia as a member of the SJZ Collective.

<http://www.johnworley.com/>

**About San Jose Jazz**

Founded in 1986, San Jose Jazz is a public benefit organization celebrating jazz as a dynamic, evolving art form and is producer of the annual San Jose Jazz Summer Fest and Winter Fest. San Jose Jazz innovates trend-setting initiatives to foster artistic ingenuity and preserve the jazz tradition as a forward-thinking movement. Through diverse music and educational programming, San Jose Jazz offers singular content and events by investing in the SF Bay Area ecosystem of exceptional talent for local and national audiences to enjoy.

For more information, please visit [sanjosejazz.org](http://sanjosejazz.org).

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Artist interviews and hi-res photos are available upon request.

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