

ORBERT DAVIS'

# CHICAGO JAZZ PHILHARMONIC

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## CHICAGO JAZZ PHILHARMONIC ANNOUNCES 2016 CHARLES W. DANISH MEMORIAL FOR MUSICAL EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

### PARTNERSHIP WITH MEDIX AWARDS FIVE STUDENTS FULL YEAR OF PRIVATE MUSIC INSTRUCTION

**Chicago, IL, February 25, 2016** – Chicago Jazz Philharmonic awarded 5 local students with a year-long scholarship award to receive private music lessons and mentoring from Chicago Jazz Philharmonic musicians.

Chicago Jazz Philharmonic's Founder and Artistic Director, Orbert Davis, was inspired to establish the **Charles W. Danish Scholarship for Musical Excellence** as a way to 'give back' the time, special care, and mentorship he received from his 4<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher, Mr. Charles W. Danish, who passed in 2011. Mr. Danish was so taken by Orbert's talent that he took initiative to drive Orbert to Chicago from Mokenca, IL, once a week for brass lessons with a renowned trumpeter teacher.

Orbert tried, time and time again, to repay Mr. Danish. In response, he said, *"If ever, you had a chance, and you saw a young kid who was talented and really wanted to play, and was serious about it, that you would attempt to do for him, what I attempted to do for you, and you'd pay me back."*

On February 25, Orbert Davis and Chicago Jazz Philharmonic, in partnership with **Medix**, were finally able to "pay him back" and pay it forward. After a nomination, application, and audition process, five students from the Chicagoland area were awarded full scholarships for a year's worth of private instrumental instruction. **We are pleased to announce the five scholarship recipients:**

#### **Laura Andrade – 7<sup>th</sup> gr. pianist at Lionel Hampton Fine & Performing Arts School in Chicago, IL**

Laura is a self-taught pianist who has been playing piano for the last four years. "The first time I ever played the piano, I was about 8 years old. It was hard for me to read notes at first but I kept practicing and practicing and got better. My favorite Beethoven composition is "Moonlight Sonata." It is beautiful!" Laura will be studying with Leandro Lopez Varady, the pianist for the CJP orchestra.

#### **Marshun McGee – 8<sup>th</sup> gr. bassist at Brooks Middle School in Harvey, IL**

Marshun is a member of the Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School concert band and jazz band, led by Dr. Roosevelt Griffin. He has attended CJP's *Summer Jazz Academy* camp for the last three years. He plays both electric and double (stand up) bass in his ensembles, but also is learning to play the piano. "I plan to become further educated in music so I can live life happily and to educate the young minds of our future to continue music in the future." Marshun will be studying with Stewart Miller, lead double bass player for the CJP orchestra.

**Jayda Pedraza – 7<sup>th</sup> gr. violinist at Lionel Hampton Fine & Performing Arts School in Chicago, IL**

Jayda has been a violin student in CJP's in-school and summer program. In addition to playing the violin, she is also learning to play the piano, sings in her school choir, and writes music. "I want to continue in my music career especially on the violin. I will work hard and dedicate my life to this violin, and I won't let anything stop me from doing that." Jayda will study with Phyllis McKenny-Sanders, a long-time Jazz Alive teaching artist and member of the CJP orchestra.

**LaKaela Prince - 7<sup>th</sup> gr. cellist and bassist at Lionel Hampton Fine & Performing Arts School in Chicago, IL**

LaKaela is a multi-talented student, playing violin, cello, and bass in Lionel Hampton's concert band, jazz band and string ensemble. Before she was nominated, she never knew that private lessons were ever an option. "I've been trying and trying to figuring out some ways where I can make my skills go "off the charts." I always wished that I could someday be able to perform in front of a crowd. The crowd would just cheer for me. Now I just might be able to see what that feels like." LaKaela will be studying both cello and bass with John Sutton, a member of the CJP orchestra and Jazz Alive teaching artist.

**Jada Scott - 8<sup>th</sup> gr. violinist at Orland Junior High School in Orland Park, IL**

Jada began playing violin in her school's orchestra four years ago. She says she was inspired to play by listening to the YouTube video *Vanessa Mae Devil's Trill*. "Long story short, my parents bought me a violin and we have been inseparable ever since." Jada has been attending CJP's *Summer Jazz Academy* for the last five years. "I grew more personally and musically during the two weeks of Jazz Camp than I did during my four years in school orchestra." Jada will be studying with Phyllis McKenny-Sanders.

In addition to supporting scholarships, **Medix** also generously donated a new instruments to several of the awardees.

"Our Core Purpose as a company is to positively impact lives, so when we had the opportunity to lock arms with Orbert and the Chicago Jazz Philharmonic team to impact these young musicians, we were truly honored," said Limouris.

If you would like to support future students, Please donate generously to The Charles W. Danish Scholarship for Musical Excellence. 100% of funds will be used to provide mentoring and private music lessons for students that show exceptional talent, promise, and dedication in their craft.

Make checks payable to "Chicago Jazz Philharmonic" and reference "Charles Danish Scholarship Fund" in the MEMO line. Mail to: Chicago Jazz Philharmonic, P.O. Box 805330, Chicago, IL 60680-5330.

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