

UC San Diego

UC San Diego News Center

By Jennifer Davies

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Holly Hofmann, a jazz flutist and an instructor at UC San Diego's Jazz Camp, says there's a real need to attract more girls and women to the world of jazz. Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications

UC San Diego Jazz Camp Looks to Recruit More Female Students to Its Ranks

The lack of female jazz musicians is by no means a new phenomenon, but it is a persistent one. To help change that, UC San Diego Jazz Camp is working to recruit more girls and women to its five-day summer program.

“I’ve never been happy about the low number of girls and women in Jazz Camp,” said Dan Atkinson, the founder and director of Jazz Camp. “I’ve questioned directors of similar programs, and, unfortunately, there are a lot fewer women than men at the camps. Maybe part of it is the old image of jazz as a ‘guy thing.’ I’d love to end that perception.”

Holly Hofmann, a renowned jazz flutist and a Jazz Camp instructor, said a renewed focus on attracting girls and young woman to the camp will not only help boost the confidence of young artists but will also strengthen and grow the musical genre.

“We need young people to play this music. A lot of times, we can encourage people, especially young women, to enter jazz programs,” Hofmann said. “If I can inspire a young woman to pursue jazz, I’ve made a contribution to the music.”

To help draw female musicians, Atkinson teamed up with award-winning trumpet player and Jazz Camp instructor Gilbert Castellanos for a special Young Lions Series performance that featured female Jazz Camp alumni. The free concert was held Wednesday night at Panama 66 in Balboa Park. The aim of the Young Lions Series was to showcase young jazz musicians and provide them with an opportunity to perform at some of San Diego’s premier music venues.



Serena Geroe, a Jazz Camp alum, was one of the featured performers at last night’s free concert that showcased female jazz musicians. Photo by Lori Serocki Photography

The performance featured a few of the many talented girls and women who have attended the camp. The core rhythm section included Angelica Pruitt, on bass; Serena Geroe, on guitar; and Jenna Stevens, on drums. There were also be special appearances by Abby Prager, on sax; Natalie Kanga, on trumpet; and Joyce Caci, on flute and soprano sax.

[UC San Diego Jazz Camp](#), which is celebrating its 14th year, will run from June 19 to June 25 and is aimed at intermediate to advanced musicians ages 14 to adult. Enrollment is limited to a maximum of 60 students. Participants will work directly with a faculty of internationally renowned jazz artists, exploring styles ranging from classic bebop to contemporary open-form.

Students receive one-on-one and small group instruction, earning three units of University of California continuing education credit. Instructors include such leading artists as Castellanos, Hofmann, Charles McPherson, Mike Wofford, Peter Sprague, Rob Thorsen, Joshua White, Myra Melford, David Borgo, Anthony Davis, Mark Dresser and many others. The camp will also feature instructor Grace Kelly, a jazz saxophonist and rising star who is also a member of The Colbert Late Show Band under Jon Batiste. The deadline to apply for this summer’s Jazz Camp is May 23. For more information, either email jazzcamp@ucsd.edu or call (858) 534-6731.

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Peter Sprague, a renowned jazz guitarist, is one of the many high-profile musicians who serve as instructors at UC San Diego's Jazz Camp. Photo by Lori Serocki Photography