

Kuumbwa Jazz Honor Band 2013 - 2014 Bio

The Kuumbwa Jazz Honor Band is an all-star ensemble of high school musicians directed by noted pianist and composer, **Eddie Mendenhall**, assisted by tenor saxophonist and honor band alum, **Dillon Baiocchi**. Having successfully auditioned, band members attend weekly rehearsals, study complex jazz theory, improvisation and arranging, and learn essential life skills such as communication, cooperation and critical thinking. The Honor Band performs at community benefits, festivals and special events, ending each school year with a concert at the renowned Kuumbwa Jazz Center.

Director, Eddie Mendenhall Bio

Eddie Mendenhall is an exceptional pianist and composer who has risen through the ranks in the bay area starting with the Monterey Jazz Festival High School All Star Band in 1989 and 1990. This band is currently known as Next Generation Orchestra, and was at that time under direction of Bill Berry. Eddie had many great opportunities while in this band, including the chance to accompany Dizzy Gillespie at the main stage of the festival. From there, Eddie earned scholarships to the Berklee College of Music in Boston and went on to graduate with a Bachelors degree in Jazz Composition.

Recent stateside projects directing the High School Honor Band and teaching the jazz improvisation workshop series, The Jazz Kiln, for Kuumbwa Jazz. He is also working as a Traveling Clinician for the Monterey Jazz Festival and performing in bands up and down the California coast. Eddie has a long performance history with musicians including “Senator” Eugene Wright, Ray Drummond, Pete Christlieb, Gary Meek, Manhattan Jazz Quintet, Ali Jackson Jr., Tommy Campbell, Calvin Keys, James Mahone, Enrique Iglesias, Peter Yellin, Virginia Mayhew, Paul Contos, Vince Lateano, Scott Steed, Steve Houghton, Mark Sherman, Akira Tana, John Schifflett, Dottie Dodgion, Mike Lent and many more.

Co-Director, Dillon Baiocchi Bio

Tenor saxophonist, Dillon Baiocchi, has participated in Kuumbwa’s education programs since 2005, culminating in his winning a spot in the Kuumbwa Jazz Honor Band. Now with his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from The New School in NYC, Dillon teaches band programs in middle schools around Santa Cruz County. Dillon brings a unique perspective to the program from his participation in Kuumbwa’s programs through the years. This year’s band is reaping the benefits of being guided by both of these wonderful musicians. !