

**Yonathan Avishai**  
**Teaching program for the Siena Jazz Master program**

*It's through my experiences as a musician and pedagogue that it was given to me to develop methods in the service musical education and creation. Learning music is not only an acquisition of knowledge. Above all, it's a demanding experience that requires a balance between mastery of the medium and deep sensitivity.*

**Approach**

In my teaching, I'm keen to pass on this experience as a whole, my aim being to provide the tools that will enable everyone to set off in search of their own musical identity. Finding the right balance between goals and means enables beginners and more accomplished musicians alike to be more effective. Thanks to an intelligent organization of our qualities, each musician will find coherence in both the technical aspects as well as in the creative process. The musician cultivate confidence in its art and in his environment, it enables him to be available, to listen and to be attentive and present in the moment. Mastering an art becomes a reflection, an echo our the here and now.

**Jazz and pedagogy**

I'm deeply convinced that the best and most effective way to discover, learn and appropriate the jazz tradition and its language is through observing its history and evolution. It is through studying the elements characterize the jazz tradition and its developments since its origins that we can appreciate the human adventure that resonates in this music. Furthermore, the historical, cultural, social and technological dimensions are essential not only to understand this music, but also to experience it. Jazz is not the first musical style in which improvisation plays an important role. However, it is the first musical language to give such prominence to personal, singular expression. Hence the difficulty of teaching it. Following the jazz tradition from its very beginning makes its learning more accessible. During my courses, we'll discover the first masters, soloists and their innovative techniques. This will provide us with a real historical and theoretical starting point from which to build an appropriate vocabulary.

**Elements of the program**

- Listening  
Our point of departure is a process of deep and attentive listening to the beginnings and evolution of the jazz tradition.
- Playing  
We try to "connect", listen and have a taste of playing in these early styles.  
In a larger context I constantly require a high standard of: Sound, rhythm, clarity , "Playing the song" and general articulation of anything we do.
- Learning a song  
We "take our time" and learn a song out of the American songbook. The goal of this process is to have a deep connection to the material we interpret in order to be able later to make it our own.  
*Background of the composition / listening to early versions / Learning and reading-saying the lyrics / interpreting the rhythm of the melody / discovering the melodic and harmonic story of the composition / Playing it simply in a "traditional" way.*
- Groove  
Groove is the very heart of this African rooted tradition.  
In our process we'll be both listening-observing and playing simple grooves on a regular basis. Going deep to the great creative force "hidden" within repetition.
- Blues  
The other fundamental ingredient in the jazz tradition is the Blues. I refer to blues not only as style, way of playing or certain type of composition. It is to me what defines the source and the way in which the language of jazz evolved. It is the major element that gives this tradition this extremely direct and expressive quality.  
After listening and recognizing this quality I propose a process using voice and speech in the service of strong emotional expression.
- Harmony and rhythm  
We'll be checking and challenging our melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and improvisational skills.  
Setting an high standard of precision of these elements.
- Repertoire  
With all these experiences we build together a repertoire that we'll be working on through the semester and that we'll be presenting in the end of year's recital. It is a mix of both standards and original music by myself and an Italian song.  
We'll be working on the material, experiencing it in different ways. Observing and looking collectively for improvement and authenticity.
- Performing  
In many ways the live performance is the ultimate experience of our musical expression. We'll be, once again observing the masters in order to draw inspiration, looking for ways to stimulate that strong emotional feeling that we want to experience and later share with our audience