



For publicity information contact:
Don Lucoff
dondlmedia@covad.net
610-667-0501

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**MILTON ACADEMY'S BOB SINICROPE
TO RECEIVE INAUGURAL
JOHN LAPORTA JAZZ EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD**

On Wednesday, January 10, at the 34th Annual International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE) Conference in New York City, the inaugural John LaPorta Jazz Educator of the Year Award will be presented to Milton Academy Jazz Director Bob Sinicrope. The ceremony will take place during the IAJE opening night concert starting at 8pm, in the Hilton New York Hotel.



Underwritten in part by Berklee College of Music, the John LaPorta Jazz Educator of the Year Award was created to recognize an outstanding international high school educator with five or more year's classroom experience who represents the highest standards of teaching and whose results in the classroom have brought distinction to their institution and their students. The acknowledgement includes a \$5,000 honorarium and a package of equipment and music for the recipient's school music program, as well as an invitation to speak to the Berklee student body at a major assembly. In addition, all expenses will be paid for the recipient to attend the IAJE Conference and receive the award.

The award is named in memory of jazz education pioneer, John LaPorta, who left behind a career that included stints playing alto saxophone and clarinet with Woody Herman, Charles Mingus, and Lennie Tristano to teach at Berklee. Passionate, opinionated, garrulous, witty, an uncompromising artist, and an inspiring teacher, LaPorta revolutionized jazz education. He spent more than 30 years at Berklee, becoming one of college's most respected and influential educators. Thanks to his innovative approach to jazz education, the college was able to open its doors to students at all levels of ability and training.

"By creating an annual award which recognizes excellence in the classroom, IAJE is able to highlight teaching standards which others can emulate as well as honoring those educators who have shown a unique commitment to jazz education and, in turn, have made a profound difference in their student's lives," said IAJE President, Chuck Owen.

"John LaPorta was one of the founding fathers of what is now the IAJE, and a cornerstone of the modern Berklee," said Berklee College of Music President Roger Brown. "A virtuoso musician who played with Parker, Mingus, Tristano, even Stravinsky, John got his real kicks out of guiding young musicians, whatever their level, helping them play together, and get better. Passing on knowledge, in this case, the central tenets of music, is a sacred trust. John was the ideal educator to name this honor for, and Bob Sinicrope is a worthy and truly deserving first recipient."

A student of John LaPorta's, Mr. Sinicrope stated, "I was deeply inspired by John's exceptional musicianship and his caring and direct style of teaching. I continue to be influenced by his encouragement and aspire to exemplify John's legacy to our profession."

A consummate educator, Bob Sinicrope founded the Milton Academy Jazz Program in 1974 and has taught there ever since. Winner of several DownBeat, MusicFestUSA, Arts and Talent, IAJE and Berklee Festival awards, the Milton Academy jazz program has produced many fine professional musicians, most notably Aaron Goldberg and Steve Lehman. The jazz program serves students who seek an introductory experience in improvisation in a small group setting.

Over the years, Bob has brought in dozens of local and international artists to work with and inspire his students. He also utilizes jazz as a way for his students to directly connect to other schools and learn about diversity. Milton Academy groups have shared performances with inner city and international schools, and even a local school for autistic children. In the classroom, students explore Afro-Cuban, Brazilian and South African music in addition to mainstream jazz.

Bob has made his mark internationally over the past three decades with clinics in schools on six continents. Other teaching credits include Jamey Aeberold's Summer Jazz Workshops since 1981, Jazzwise Summer School (London) since 1997, John Payne Music Center (1979-2001) years, and Jamaican Peace Corps. His IAJE conference presentations include *Develop Your Own Groove* (1994); *Tips on Teaching Improvisation to Beginners* (1997); *A History of Jazz Bass PowerPoint presentation and Walking Bass Lines for Beginners* at the 2004 South Africa Jazz Educators conference; and *Tips on Using Technology in the Classroom* (2007).

His special connections with South Africa have evolved since 1991 when Abdullah Ibrahim visited Milton Academy and invited the school's combo to tour South Africa. Bob is a regular visitor there and has forged special bonds with Johnny Meko's *Music Academy of Gauteng*, Darius Brubeck and the *University of Kwa-Zulu Natal*, the *Sinikthemba Choir* and the *Amy Biehl Foundation*. Bob's *World Leaders* band were featured presenters/performers at the 2004 South Africa jazz educators conference. In March 2007, Milton Academy students will tour South Africa for the sixth time and his groups have delivered over \$40,000 worth of donated materials to township music schools.

Bob's Milton groups have performed at six IAJE conferences, twice at the White House for President and Mrs. Clinton, at the North Sea, Fribourg, Viennes and Montreux Jazz Festivals and at local jazz clubs. They have also opened for Eric Alexander, Lynne Arriale, the Either Orchestra, Hal Galper, Jim Hall, Dave Holland, Abdullah Ibrahim, Elvin Jones, Hank Marr, Poncho Sanchez, and Kenny Werner. Bob has also helped raise funds through his music for the Iraqi Symphony, Amnesty International, and Katrina Relief. He has been honored with the Milton Academy Talbot Baker Teaching Award, a Berklee College of Music Alumni Grant, a National Endowment for the Arts Study Grant, five Massachusetts Arts Lottery performance grants and two Milton Academy Endowed funds which bring visiting artists to campus.

A much in demand bassist, Bob currently leads two groups *The World Leaders* and *SoundsGlobal*. His eclectic credits include performances with Shirley Bassey, Jerry Bergonzi, Billy Eckstine, Jon Faddis, Tiny Grimes, Abdullah Ibrahim, Papa Jo Jones, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Babatunde Olatunji, the Boston Pops, Bobby Sanabria, and the Artie Shaw Band.

For more information about nominating someone for the John LaPorta Jazz Educator the Year Award or other IAJE awards, visit <http://www.iaje.org/iaje.aspx?pid=59> email awards@iaje.org or phone 785-776-8744, ext. 107.

Media inquiries should be directed to:
Don Lucoff/DL Media
Phone: (610) 667-0501
Fax: (610) 667-0502
Email: dondlmedia@covad.net