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A short time after my first semester began back in 1983, I wrote a letter to the White House trying to convey my excitement for what I felt, and still feel. I believed that the "Arts" Big Band was the best high school Big Band in the nation at the time, and I wanted to share this with the world. I wanted them to play a concert at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue for the President. My return answer from our capital was "Thanks, but..." It would be twenty-two years later that one of our alumni, Matt Marantz, would play and represent our school at this address. Matt performed with Dr. Billy Taylor, James Moody, Chico Hamilton and Jazz, the New Generation II in June of 2004 following right on the heels of his graduation from Booker T. Our Jazz Combo I performed around the world, from 2001 to 2004, as a group and as individuals, performing at prestigious venues such as, The Monterey Jazz Festival in Monterey CA, (4 performances in 4 years) The World Sax Conference in Minneapolis, MN, The Mid-West Conference in Chicago, IL, The NFAA, Arts Recognition and Talent Search in Miami, FL, The International Association for Jazz Educators Conference in New York (3 performances in 4 years), The Grammy Big Band in Los Angeles, CA, (2 performances in 4 years), The Texas Music Educators Conference in San Antonio, TX, (3 performances in 4 years) The Vail Jazz Workshop in Vail Colorado, The Monterey All-Star Japan Big Band, (summer 2003) Japan, The Brubeck Institute in Stockton, California, The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, and finally it culminated in a command performance at the White House at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue! While there at the White House with our son Matt, we were privileged to have the opportunity to meet and talk with the President and Mrs. Bush. When the President asked me where I worked, I proudly told him Booker T. Washington HSPVA. Mrs. Bush immediately turned to her husband and said, "Honey, they are from Booker T. Washington High School. You know, the one with alumni such as Norah Jones and Erykah Badu." We were stunned, but proud to know that our school had a reputation that had traveled as far as our nation's capital!

These wonderful alumni remain great supporters of our school and do much to inspire those who continue to seek the same level of artistic excellence that they have come to represent. However seven alumni, who have garnered twenty-two Grammys collectively, do not really tell the whole story. It's the hundreds of alumni, who every day perform and carry on the business of music and art, that keep our school, and the arts in general, alive and well.

I might have gotten discouraged way back in 1983 if I had known it would take twenty-two years to have our school represented at the White House by one of our graduates. However, through the years I knew it was an attainable goal only because our students are like no others. It is their commitment and energy that fuels our quest as a school to promote and attain the highest level of art excellence possible while still in high school. From our present students' achievements, to our alumni's long record of accomplishments, it's quite obvious that we, as an arts institution, have been consistent on working towards and, in many cases reaching, these weighty goals. One hundred and sixty-six "DownBeat Student Music Awards," two hundred NFAA awardees with fifteen Presidential Scholars in the Arts, two "Grammy Big Band" awardees, three "Grammy Signature Awards" for the music department are just a few of our school's achievements.

To those students who dream the impossible and realize that Booker T. Arts Magnet is a place where the impossible can become reality - "Thank you." Thanks also, for allowing me to enjoy this incredible experience with you for the past 24 years. What a ride it has been!

Bart Marantz,

Jazz Studies, Booker T. Washington HSPVA



MUSIC COURSES

Music Theory I
Comprehensive Musicianship I-II
AP Music Theory
Music History - Survey
Music History and Literature
Arts Internship
Applied Music
Music Business
Live Sound and Recording I-II

Orchestral

Orchestra I
Advanced Orchestra II-III
String Technique I-IV
Chamber String Ensemble

Band

Band I-III
Advanced Band II-IV

Choral

Vocal Technique I-II
Vocal Literature
Freshman Choir
Sophomore Choir
Junior/Senior Choir (Minnesingers)

Piano

Piano I-IV
Accompanying I-II
Functional Piano

Guitar

Guitar I-IV

Jazz

Jazz Improvisation
Jazz Piano
Jazz Arranging I-IV
Jazz Combo I

Jazz Combo II

Synthesis
Introduction to Music Synthesis
Music Synthesis I-IV

Latin Music

Latin Percussion I-IV
Mariachi
History of Latin American Music

Performing Ensembles

Entertainers
Lab Singers
Opera Workshop
Meistersingers
MIDI Ensemble
R&B Ensemble
Latin Ensemble