

RENO JAZZ ORCHESTRA



THE RENO JAZZ ORCHESTRA
THE RENO YOUTH JAZZ ORCHESTRA
NORTHERN NEVADA

ANNUAL REPORT: FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025

IN LOVING MEMORY OF BILL HECHT



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This year marked another milestone in our mission to enrich the cultural landscape of Northern Nevada through world-class jazz performance, education, and community engagement.

Our Vision: To make Northern Nevada recognized for the world-class performances by the Reno Jazz Orchestra, the artistry of its musicians, and its exceptional jazz education programs.

Our Mission: To build a greater appreciation of jazz in Northern Nevada by providing outstanding band performances, promoting the artistry of Reno Jazz Orchestra musicians through a variety of ensembles, and supporting jazz education through a mentorship program in middle schools, high schools, and colleges.

First and foremost, I want to extend heartfelt gratitude to our Patrons, Sponsors, Donors, and Fans. Your generous support continues to make our work possible. With your partnership, we have sustained and expanded our ability to present world-class guest artists, engaging programming, and inspirational education initiatives that nurture the next generation of jazz musicians.

This season, we celebrated a 5% increase in ticket sales, reflecting both the growing appreciation of jazz in our region and the community's enthusiasm for our performances. We also expanded our rehearsal and office spaces at our home in the Note-Able Music Therapy Services building, which has allowed us to increase our capacity for rehearsals, classes, performances, and donor events. This growth strengthens our foundation and enables deeper collaboration with local partners and students.

As we look ahead, I am excited to continue working alongside our musicians, educators, and community partners to elevate RJO's artistry and reach. Jazz remains a living, breathing art form—one that thrives through innovation, education, and shared passion. I am proud, humbled, and grateful to contribute to this journey as we bring the joy of jazz to audiences across Northern Nevada and beyond.

Vernon Scarbrough
Executive Director
Reno Jazz Orchestra

HISTORY & MISSION

The Reno Jazz Orchestra has been based in Northern Nevada for over 25 years and was formed by musicians who performed and traveled the world with acts such as Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Elvis Presley, Natalie Cole, Luciano Pavarotti, and other legendary performers. The tradition of jazz excellence set by the founders continues today with jazz professors, educators, and graduates from the University of Nevada, Reno's jazz studies program setting new performance standards.



EDUCATION: A YEAR IN REVIEW

Scenes from the 2024-2025 Reno Jazz Orchestra Education Programs

250

hours of instruction



2,397

community members engaged



850

students educated



Thank you for your continued support in fostering the next generation of jazz musicians!
Your contributions make these programs possible and help us reach more students each year.

JAZZ IN THE SCHOOLS

The 26th annual Jazz in the Schools event, held at the University of Nevada, Reno on February 8th, saw a featured 19 school ensemble performances and over 400 student musicians. The University of Nevada, Reno jazz faculty offered both beginning and advanced improvisation clinics. Students had the invaluable opportunity to work with Latin percussionist and educator Aaron Serfaty as well as talented musicians Jessika Smith, Greg Johnson, Jonathan Phillips and Gary Mayne.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Alder Creek Middle School Band
Billinghurst Middle School Band
Billinghurst Middle School Golden Strings
Carson Middle School
Carson High School
Damonte Ranch High School
Depoali Middle School

Fernley High School
Hug High School
McQueen High School Band
McQueen High School Eclectic Orchestra
North Tahoe High School
Reno High School
Swope Middle School



EDUCATION

LESSONS PROGRAM

Now in its third year, the Lessons Program continues to serve local Title I schools, offering students from low-income families the opportunity to learn and participate in jazz education at no cost. This year, RJO partnered with Traner Middle School and Wooster High School, providing over 60 hours of individual and small group music lessons during the school day with the help of 5 local instructors.

DISCOVER JAZZ WORKSHOP

Under the guidance of talented instructor Dylan Coleman-Tunstall and guest instructor Nick Bentz, 19 students from 13 schools honed their skills in ear training, jazz theory, and improvisation and ended the semester with the RJO Education Programs Showcase performance in June. We were thrilled when several students choose to audition for RYJO and earned spots in RYJO II, where they continue to build on the strong foundation developed through the workshop.

MENTOR PROGRAM

The Reno Jazz Orchestra Mentor Program successfully completed its 14th year, continuing its mission to support jazz education in local schools. Professional jazz musicians and educators provided guidance on improvisation, jazz style, and instrument-specific techniques. This past school year, 9 RJO Mentors conducted 44 sessions at 8 different schools, all at no cost to the schools thanks to the support of our donors.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Billinghurst Middle School
Carson Middle School
Damonte Ranch HS
Depoali Middle School
Fernley High School

McQueen High School Eclectic Orchestra
North Valleys High School
Reno Youth Jazz Orchestra
Swope Middle School

RENO YOUTH JAZZ ORCHESTRA

The Reno Youth Jazz Orchestra (RYJO) serves as a platform for big band and small group performances by young musicians. The 19th season commenced in November after a successful audition period in October 2024, which saw an increased number of students. RYJO II was added to give more students an opportunity to play jazz. RYJO ensembles performed 20 times this year, including at prominent events at Bartley Ranch, Folsom Jazz Festival, and the Nevada Museum of Art.



RENO JAZZ ORCHESTRA

2024/2025 RJO CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Fuego - RJO with Edgardo Cambón

Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival - Monday Night Series

Camille Thurman with the RJO

Carson City Jazz and Beyond Festival

May Arboretum Society's "Picnic in the Park" Music Series

Legends in Jazz - RJO with Nicolas Bearde

Soulful Christmas - RJO with Tasche

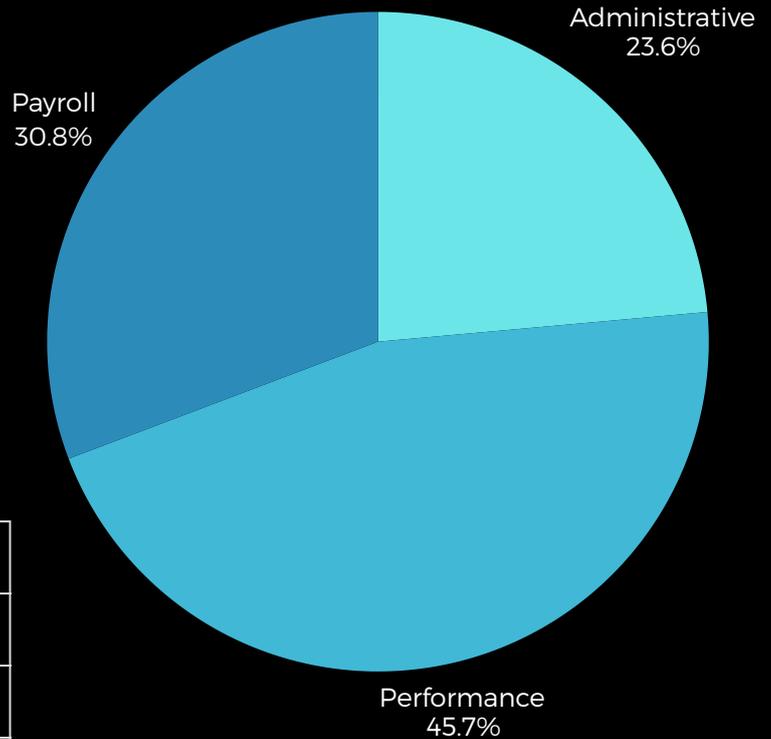
Jazz In the Schools w/ Aaron Serfaty

Sinatra sings, Basie Swings - RJO with Matt Mauser



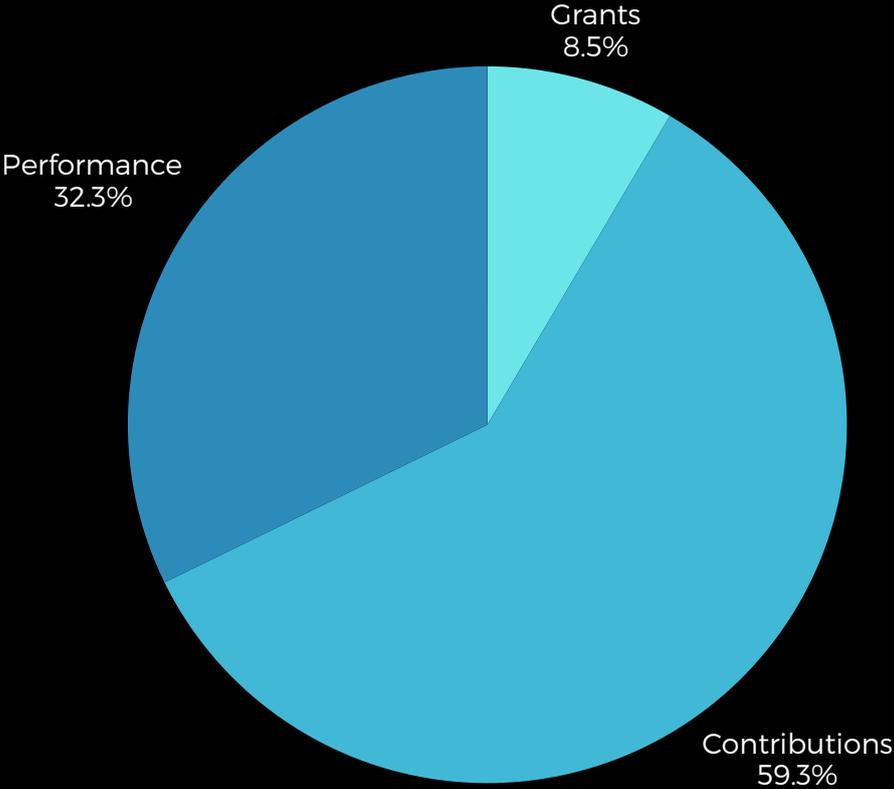
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Expense Summary



Administrative Expenses	\$102,792
Performance Expenses	\$199,210
Payroll Expenses	\$134,251
Total	\$436,253

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



INCOME SUMMARY

Grants	\$35,324
Contributions	\$247,205
Performance	\$134,512
Total Income	\$425,278

OUR GRACIOUS DONORS

RJO Diamond Donors (\$20,000+)

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Anonymous

RJO Emerald Donors (\$10,000 - \$19,999)

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Memory of Bill Hecht

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Thank you to our audience of friends, fans, partners, corporate donors, board members, volunteers, and musicians for helping to make this music possible.

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INSPIRING OUR YOUTH, MAKING MUSIC TOGETHER

Thanks to the generous support of our donors and community, the performances of the Reno Jazz Orchestra and Reno Youth Jazz Orchestra continue to enrich our community's cultural landscape, inspire excellence and collaboration, and transform lives through education.

Let us all celebrate how music connects us all for all the right reasons.

Thank you for your support!



CONTACT US

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Like us, follow us, Share your love of Jazz.

