

# International Association for Jazz Education - Texas

**Alex Parker**

---

I am excited about the opportunity to write this article for the TBA *Bandmasters Review*. The members of IAJE-Texas are committed to furthering the teaching and learning of Jazz and all other kinds of music in our schools. We are fortunate to be able to work so closely with other great organizations like TBA and TMEA in achieving these goals. I would like to thank TBA for giving us the opportunity to share with you some of the things that we are working on at IAJE-Texas.

This has been an exciting year for the Texas Unit of IAJE. There are many new programs and exciting events that have taken place or will take place throughout this school year.

First, I would like to introduce our new board for 2007-2009. The new officers are:

President: Alex Parker, Director of Jazz Studies at Baylor University

President-Elect: Scott McDonald, Band Director at Judson High School

Vice-President: Roland Sandoval, Band Director at Sandra Day O'Connor High School

Secretary: Cathy Benford, Band Director at Stony Point High School

Treasurer: Heather Mensch, Jazz Director at Tyler Junior College

Past-President: Richard Birk, Jazz Director, at Brazosport College

Executive Director: Ronnie Rios, Band Director at Harlingen High School

I look forward to working with these great educators to enhance and expand jazz education at all levels in Texas' schools.

Second, we have started a school grant program to assist elementary, middle and high school jazz programs in our state. This money can be used for everything from clinicians to music and equipment to guest artists. With these grants, we will be assisting our members to better educate their young musicians for many years to come. We have already awarded our first annual IAJE Texas school grants to four very deserving school programs. The grant recipients for this year are: Donna High School from

Donna, directed by Patrick Trahan; Georgetown High School from Georgetown, directed by Amanda Marino; Vernon Middle School from Harlingen, directed by Keith Disantis; and Belton High School in Belton, directed by Dan Suniga. Congratulations to these jazz programs and we hope that



these grants help to further jazz education in your schools. If you missed the opportunity to enter this year, make plans to enter before October 1, 2008 for next year's grants. (See our web site [www.iajetexas.org](http://www.iajetexas.org) for details.)

Another exciting new program for this year is the start of IAJE sponsored Jazz Symposiums around the state. IAJE Texas will be hosting three jazz symposiums for elementary, middle and high school directors as well as college

## IAJE - Texas

students aspiring to teach jazz in the school system. These clinics will be a great way to learn from experienced musicians and educators about many different aspects of Jazz Pedagogy, as well as a great way to learn from and get to know other jazz educators in your area. The goal of these sessions is to help to raise the level of jazz pedagogy in our state and to help directors to teach this great American art form.

This year's symposiums will be focused on two big aspects of jazz education: improvisation and the rhythm section. They will be held at Brazosport College in Lake Jackson, Trinity University in San Antonio, and McNeil High School in Austin. (Plans are in the works for symposiums in Dallas, El Paso and Amarillo or Lubbock next year for those of you in North and West Texas.) If you are interested in attending one of these symposiums, please

contact: Richard Birk, 979-230-3272, Richard.Birk@brazosport.edu at the Brazosport site, Alex Parker, 254-710-4625, Alex\_Parker@baylor.edu for the

Austin site and Edwin Parker, 210-999-8259, edwin.parker@trinity.edu for the San Antonio site. The cost for these symposiums is \$25 for IAJE members and \$40 for non-members (this cost includes lunch). Please email or call us with any questions that you might have about these symposiums. We'd love to see you there.

I am always open to ideas for improving IAJE-Texas. If you are interested in becoming a member or in finding out more information about our organization, please feel free to contact me at Alex\_Parker@baylor.edu or 254-710-4625.

Once again, thank you to the Texas Bandmasters Association for allowing us the opportunity to let you know what is happening with IAJE-Texas.

**The members of IAJE-Texas are committed to furthering the teaching and learning of Jazz and all other kinds of music. We have started a school grant program to assist jazz programs in our state. IAJE-Texas will be hosting three jazz symposiums for directors as well as college students aspiring to teach jazz in the school system.**

*In addition to being the 2007-09 President of IAJE - Texas, Alex Parker is the Director of Jazz Studies at Baylor University. He joined the faculty at Baylor in the fall of 2001. He serves as the director of the Baylor Jazz Ensemble, the Baylor Concert Jazz Ensemble, jazz combos, jazz string quartet and he teaches undergraduate and graduate students in several jazz disciplines. Before coming to Baylor, Mr. Parker taught at Pflugerville High School. Mr. Parker holds a Master of Music degree from the University of Miami at Coral Gables and a Bachelor of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music. His background is in jazz writing, jazz performance and jazz pedagogy, as well as trumpet performance and instrumental teaching.*