

**Brian Levy**  
Musicologist and Jazz Saxophonist  
(PhD, DMA, MM)

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Profile at NEC: <http://necmusic.edu/faculty/brian-levy?lid=1&sid=3>

YouTube Channel: [Brian Levy's YouTube Channel](#)

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**Education**

**PhD in Musicology, 2012**

Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

Dissertation: "Harmonic and Rhythmic Interaction in the Music of John Coltrane"

**DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) in Jazz Studies-Performance/Theory Minor, 2009**

New England Conservatory of Music, Boston, MA

*Phi Kappa Lambda* nominee for 4.0 GPA

DMA Thesis: "Freedom versus Form: Polyrhythmic Interactions in the Music of John Coltrane's Classic Quartet"

**MM (Master of Music) in Jazz Performance, 2003**

Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY

**BM (Bachelor of Music) in Jazz Performance, 2001**

William Paterson University, Wayne, NJ

Graduated *Summa cum Laude*

Awarded "The Outstanding Senior Scholar" (School of Arts/Communication)

**Current Employment (2023 – Present)**

San Diego State University, Director of Jazz Studies/Assistant Professor)

**Past Employment/Appointment**

The New England Conservatory of Music (2013-Present)

**Joint Appointment (Full time)**

- Department of Jazz Studies
  - Teaching roles
    - Teaching performance and academic courses in jazz
    - Coaching jazz ensembles
    - Mentoring students in studio lessons
    - Advising students on their doctoral theses

- Assistant Chair of Jazz Studies: Administrative duties including directing the jazz ensemble program
- **Department of Music History and Musicology**
  - Academic courses: doctoral seminars in musicological research; jazz history; philosophy of music
- **Other Roles**
  - Chairperson of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee
  - Fulbright Program Advisor
  - Assist with recruitment, promotional-juries, and auditions

### Harvard University (Teaching Assistantships)

#### Music Department:

- 2012 (taught multiple sections of *Music Theory I*, MUS 51a)
- 2010 (taught a section of *Jazz Improvisation*, MUS 186)

### Tenure Track University Offers

Assistant Professorship, University of Illinois at Chicago: Jazz Artist and Music Theory (May, 2013)

### Part-time Teaching Appointments

- 2013-Present New England Conservatory (Joint Appointment – Department Jazz Studies; Department of Music History and Musicology)

### Courses and Teaching Roles at New England Conservatory

*I created many of these courses and designed the curriculum for all of them*

- Jazz Studies
  - JS 100/500 Brian Levy Studio
  - JS 110/510 Brian Levy Ensemble (coach)
  - JS 431 *Jazz Improvisation Techniques*
  - JS 435 *Language of Bebop*
  - JS 436? *Great Solos of Sonny Rollins, Clifford Brown, John Coltrane, and Freddie Hubbard: from Analysis to Practice*
  - JS 570 *Topics in Jazz Theory and Analysis: Charlie Parker and Bud Powell*
  - JS 479T/579T *Jazz Styles: Improvisation*
  - JS 221T/521T *Jazz Improvisation for Non-majors I*
  - JS 222T/522T *Jazz Improvisation for Non-majors II*
  - JS 570E *Topics in Jazz Theory and Analysis: John Coltrane Quartet*
  - JS 570F *Topics in Jazz Theory and Analysis: Parker and Powell*
  - JS 570G *Topics in Jazz Theory and Analysis: Miles Davis*
- Music History and Musicology
  - MHST 117 *Jazz History for Non-Jazz Majors*
  - MHST 251 *Jazz Improvisation: 1917-1955*
  - MHST 252 *Form and Freedom in Jazz: 1955-1974*
  - MHST 516 *Selected Readings in Jazz*
  - MHST 517B *Topics in Jazz History: Charlie Parker and Miles Davis*

MHST 517C *Topics in Jazz History: John Coltrane*

MHST 620A *Philosophy of Music in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche*

MHST 901 *Doctoral Seminar in Musicology I*

MHST 902 *Doctoral Seminar in Musicology II*

### **Additional Teaching Experience as the Teacher of Record**

- New England Conservatory (Spring, 2013)  
Tonal Practice I
- New England Conservatory (Fall, 2012)  
MHST 517 *Topics in Jazz: John Coltrane* (also designed course)
- Harvard University (Fall, 2012)  
Music 2 *Foundations of Tonal Theory* (TA/Section Instructor)  
Music 51a *Foundations of Tonal Theory* (TA/Section Instructor)
- Brandeis University (Spring, 2010)  
Mus 192B-1 *Graduate Seminar: Jazz Improv and Analysis*
- Harvard University (Spring, 2010)  
Mus 186 *Jazz Improvisation* (Instructor of multiple sections and designed curriculum)
- Brandeis University, University Prize Instructorship (Fall, 2009)  
Mus 35a *Freedom and Convention: Jazz Improvisation from Charlie Parker to Miles Davis and John Coltrane* (also designed course)
- New England Conservatory (Spring, 2008)  
MHST 517 (graduate course) *Topics in Jazz: The Legacies of John Coltrane and Miles Davis*
- Suffolk University (2005-2008)  
Instructor of jazz ensemble
- New England Conservatory, Teaching Fellowship (2005)  
THYU 093 *Fundamentals of Music Theory* (developed a curriculum based on improvisation)
- Brandeis University, Teaching Assistant (2007-2009)  
MUS 1a *Introduction to Music*  
MUS 5a *Fundamentals of Music Theory*  
MUS 131b *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*  
MUS 133a *Classic and Romantic Music*
- New England Conservatory, Teaching Assistant (Spring, 2005)  
MHST 111 *Introduction to Musical Styles*

### **Teaching Experience as an Assistant Instructor for Jerry Bergonzi**

*At New England Conservatory (5-6 weeks per school year, 2006-2012)*

- Instruct Graduate Improvisation Seminars  
JS 567 and JS 568 *Graduate Jazz Improvisation Seminar I and II*  
JS 532 *Hexatonics*  
JS 528 *Intervalllic Improvisation*  
JS 529 *Melodic Rhythms in Jazz Improvisation*
- Instruct Graduate Performance Seminars  
JS 587T *Seminar in Performance*
- Direct Ensembles (graduate and undergraduate)  
JS 110 and JS 510

### **Teaching Awards, Fellowships, Prizes, and Scholarships**

- Sabbatical (spring, 2023, to complete an anthology of jazz with coauthor Keith Waters).
- Recipient of the 2021 Louis and Adrienne Krasner Teaching Excellence Award at New England Conservatory of Music.
- Faculty Development Grants at New England Conservatory (2016, 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022)
- Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching (Spring, 2013)
- Andrew W. Mellon Dissertation Year Fellowship (Brandeis University, 2011-2012)
- Teaching Assistantships (Harvard University, 2010 and 2012)
- University Prize Instructorship (Brandeis University, 2009)
- Max Kade Grants and CGES Grants (2007, 2009, and 2010)
- Merit Scholarship (New England Conservatory, 2003-2006)
- DMA Fellowship (New England Conservatory, 2005)
- Presidential/Merit Scholarship (New England Conservatory, 2001-2003)
- Selected to be first exchange student from Manhattan School of Music to the Amsterdam Conservatory in The Netherlands (2002)
- Won the “Outstanding Senior Scholar” award in 2001 (WPUNJ, College of Arts & Communication)
- Won the “Excellence in Academic Achievement” award in 2001 (WPUNJ, Department of Music)
- Selected by bassist Rufus Reid to represent William Paterson University at Steans Institute for Young Artists at Ravinia (Summer, 2001)

### **Publications**

- Textbook on Jazz: *Learning Jazz Improvisation through Historical Voices: Roles Rhythms, and Routines*, coauthored with Keith Waters. This is a coauthored this textbook with distinguished author Keith Waters. The book is under contract with Oxford University Press, scheduled to be published in May of 2024.
- April, 2020 Publication: “Harmonic and Rhythmic Oppositions in Jazz: The Special Case of John Coltrane and His Classic Quartet.” *Jazz Perspectives*.
- PhD Dissertation: “Harmonic and Rhythmic Interaction in the Music of John Coltrane (May, 2012)
- “Freedom versus Form: Polyrhythmic Interactions in the Music of John Coltrane’s ‘Classic Quartet,’” (2009)
- “Polyrhythmic Superimposition in Jazz: An Overview of Elvin Jones’ and Jazz Artists’ Use of Hemiola and Implied Meters Before 1965” published in *Sonus Theory Journal* (Fall, 2006)

### **Conference Papers and Presentations**

- Invited lecturer and masterclass (October, 2022)
  - Theory and Musicology Colloquium: The University of Mississippi “Descending Pathways and Underlying Thirds.”
- Invited lecturer and masterclass (October, 2021)
  - Pergolesi Conservatory in Fermo, Italy (invited to present the pedagogical approach of our textbook)

- Bologna Conservatory (masterclass-lecture on John Coltrane Classic Quartet)
- “Comping Structures in Jazz Practice” at an international symposium: *Music and Rhythm since 1900* at University of Colorado at Boulder (November, 2019)
- “Pursuance and Miles’ Mode’: Harmonic and Rhythmic Interactions in the Classic Quartet of John Coltrane” Academic paper at the Society for Music Theory’s national meeting in Washington D. C. (November, 2017)
- Improvisation workshop in Karlsruhe, Germany (November, 2017)
- Invited Guest Lecturer University of Colorado at Boulder (October, 2017)
  - Master-class on Charlie Parker
  - Workshop/master-class on developing a rhythmic vocabulary
  - Invited speaker for a lecture on the Music of John Coltrane
- International conference at University of Surrey *Miles Davis and John Coltrane at 90: Retrospect and Prospect* (October, 2016)
  - Academic paper: “Untangling the Complex Harmonic and Rhythmic Interactions of Coltrane’s Quartet”
  - Performance presentation: “From Transcription to Performance: Creating Oppositions with the Rhythmic Implications of Elvin Jones and the Harmonic Superimpositions of Coltrane and Tyner”
- Organizer and Host of an NEC Colloquium “Miles Davis and His Circle in the 1960s: Improvisational and Compositional Breakthroughs” featuring Dave Holland (Davis’s Bassist in the late 1960s), Dr. Keith Waters, and Dr. Ingrid Monson (April, 2016)
- Performances, academic lectures and seminars, master-classes at the 2013 Xinghai International Jazz Festival & Jazz Higher Education Forum at Xinghai Conservatory in China funded by the US State Department through the Office of the Consul General
- “Form, Interaction, and Implication in the Classic Quartet of John Coltrane” AMS New England Chapter Meeting of the American Musicological Society (Sept., 2012)

### **Past and Upcoming Tours since 2016**

- Highlights
  - Smalls - NYC, USA
  - Winter Jazz - Copenhagen, Denmark
  - Birdland - Neuburg, Germany
  - Bird's Eye - Basel, Switzerland
  - Jazz Station - Brussels, Belgium
  - Zig Zag - Berlin, Germany
  - Jazzpoint - Linz, Austria
  - Harris Piano Bar - Cracow, Poland
  - Riv 38 - Paris, France
  - BR Studio 2 - Munich, Germany
  - Jazzklubben - Hässleholm, Sweden
  - De Tor - Enschede, Holland
- Upcoming Tours with “The Rick Hollander Quartet Featuring Brian Levy”
  - European tours in both November, 2023 and February, 2024.

- Past Thirteen Tours with the “Rick Hollander Group Featuring Brian Levy” (2016-2022)
  - Europe: February, 2023
    - Jazz Forum Amsec, Hagenberg Austria; Wirthaus, Taglaching; Jazzclub, Drosendorf; Stadtgarten, Köln; Cubee Speciale, Setephanskirchen; Freies Musikzentrum, Munich; Prümer Brauhaus, Prüm; Kultur-Stadl, Vilgertshofen; Jazzfreunde, Kassel; Jazzclub, Eschwege; Kulturetage Messestadt, Munich; C-Keller, Weimar; Jazzclub, Wörth am Rhein; Schlot, Berlin; CVJM, Lübeck; Jazzhaus, Heidelberg.
  - Europe: November, 2022
    - Tante Betty, Nürnberg; Gdanska, Oberhausen; Jazzstation; Brussels; Lokerse Jazzclub, Lokeren; Jazz in Hasselt; Jazzclub, Abensberg; Pierre Grasse, Halle; Jazz Club, Hannover; Klever Jazzfreunde e.V., Kleve; Jazzclub; Bamberg.
  - Europe: February, 2022
    - Kammerlichtspiele, Klagenfurt; Jazz Session '88, Schorndorf; Jazzclub, Lübbecke; Kulturstadl, Reminlingen (live recording for Bayerischer Rundfunk); C. Keller, Weimar; Tressor Vinum, Pullach; Ermitage, Schwaz; Vogler, Munich.
  - Europe: November, 2021
    - Blue Note, Idar Oberstein; Jazzport, Friedrichshafen; Loisachhalle, Wolfratshausen; Jazzstudio, Nürnberg; Jazz im Schloss, Seefeld; Ella and Louis, Mannheim; Jazzkeller, Pirmasens; Chambinzky Theater, Würzburg, Kiste Jazzclub, Stuttgart; recording session
  - Europe: February, 2020
    - Jazzclub, Iserlohn; Le Pirate, Rosenheim; Jazzclub, Abensberg; Wirtshaus, Taglaching; Englishcher Bahnhof, Husum; Jazzclub, Rostock
  - Europe: November, 2019
    - TIF, Kassel; Bosco, Gauting; Bismark's Basement, Bad Kissingen; Jazz Cup, Copenhagen; Jazz Corner, Varberg (Sweden); Jazzklubb, Hässleholm; Bird's Eye, Basel; Die Kellerei, Reutte (Austria); Zig Zag, Berlin.
  - Europe: April, 2019
    - Seidl Keller, Vienna; Standard, Würzburg; The Raven, Straubing; Musiksalon, Diessen; Puppenkiste, Augsburg; B-flat, Berlin; Hirsch, Moosburg; Jazzclub Kiste, Stuttgart; Jazzclub, Minden
  - Europe: November, 2018
    - Jacques Pelzer Jazz Club, Liege; Pompstation, Amsterdam; Jazz-Club, Eschwege; Bassgeige, Braunschweig; Fluxx Studios (recording) Munich; Stadttheater, Amberg; Bayerischer Rundfunk, Munich; Kulturforum, Villach; Jazz-Schmiede, Düsseldorf; Jazz am See, Feldafing
  - Europe: February, 2018
    - Ermitage, Schwaz; Altes Kino, Ebersberg; Kultur Stadl, Vigertshofen; Harris Piano Bar, Krakow; Musikschule, Wertingen; 38 Riv, Paris; Café die Schranne, Wasserburg; Jazzclub Alluvium, Oldenburg; Heptone, Ittree
  - Europe: November, 2017
    - Jazzclub Unterfahrt, Munich; Freiraum, Jenbach; Hemignway Lounge, Karlsruhe; Jazzstudio, Nürnberg, Germany; St. Georgen, Attergau; B-flat, Berlin; Jazzclub in der Mitte, Reutlingen; Gdanska, Oberhausen, Jazz Station, Brussels

- Europe: August, 2017
  - Small's Jazz Club, NYC; Riles Jazz Club, Boston
- Europe: February, 2017
  - *JP's Jazz Club*, Liege; *Kultur-Stadl*, Vilgertshofen; *Birdland*, Neuburg; *Bischofsmühle*, Hildesheim; *Sägenwerk*, Bad Hofgastein; *Kammerlichtspiele*, Klagenfurt; *Le Pirate*, Rosenheim; *Jazzclub Armer Konrad*, Weinstadt; *Jazzclub*, Ludwigsburg; *Pod Filarami*, Gorzow Wielkopolski.
- Europe: November, 2016
  - *Disharmonie*, Schweinfurt; *Jazzkeller*, Frankfurt; *Jazzpodium De Tor*, Enschede, Holland; *Bassgeige*, Braunschweig; *Konzertstadl*, Reimlingen; *Grüne Halle*, Fürth; *Jazzclub*, Eschwege; *Künstlerhaus Kempten*, Kempten; *Royal Garden Jazz Club*, Graz; *Schlachthof*, Kassel.
- Europe: February, 2016
  - *Bix Jazzclub*, Stuttgart; *Cave 61 Jazz Club*, Heilbronn; *Birdland*, Hamburg; *Lokerse Jazzklub*, Lokeren; *Archiduc*, Brussels; *Jazzbar Vogler*, Munich; *Saal der VR-Bank*, Wertigen; *Neruda Kulturcafe*, Augsburg; *Jazzclub Paderborn*, Paderborn; *Jazztone Lörrach*, Lörrach; *Altes Pfandhaus*, Köln; Studio Recording in Osnabrück

### **Brian Levy Digital Portfolio**

The following links comprise recordings and videos of originals and arrangements from concerts from the past decade. I hope you enjoy.

1. "World as Will" (Brian Levy)  
Brian Levy Quartet (September, 2022)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGc0-Q4lB3U>
2. "Con" (Brian Levy)  
Brian Levy Quintet (April, 2023)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q22cxQ4lp2U>
3. "You Stepped out of a Dream"  
Brian Levy Quintet (April, 2023)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vs\\_-W9vl7g4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vs_-W9vl7g4)
4. "Pensativa" (Clare Fischer)  
*Brian Levy Quartet (September, 2022)*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pT2G98TE4Pw>
5. "I Remember You"  
*Brian Levy Quartet (September, 2022)*  
[Youtube link](#)
6. "Veil of Maya" (Levy)  
*Brian Levy Quartet featuring Joe Hunt (2017)*  
[YouTube Link](#)
7. "Glad as Can Be" (Hollander)  
Rick Hollander Quartet Featuring Brian Levy at Smalls in NYC  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUbAfZ4UZHM>

8. “Transfigured Night” (Schoenberg; arranged by Levy)  
Brian Levy Quartet (2015)  
[YouTube link](#)
9. Excerpt from one of four Instructional Improvisation DVDs I made with Jerry Bergonzi  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQPZRdCAVu8>

### **CD and DVD Recordings**

- **Commercial CD/Recording** *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* by “The Rick Hollander Quartet Featuring Brian Levy” (Laika Records; November, 2021)
- **Commercial CD/Recording** *The Best Is Yet to Come* by “The Rick Hollander Quartet Featuring Brian Levy” (Laika Records; September, 2019)
- **Commercial CD/Recording** *On the Up and Up* by “The Rick Hollander Quartet Featuring Brian Levy” (Laika Records; October, 2016)
- **Commercial DVD:** *Jerry Bergonzi-Creating Your Own Vocabulary, vol. 3*  
DVD on a rhythmic approach to improvising  
Credited as performer (saxophone and piano), creative advisor to Bergonzi, and DVD editor, recorded December, 2011 (will be released by Jazz Heaven, 2014)
- **Commercial DVD:** *Jerry Bergonzi-Saxophone DVD*  
DVD focused on playing the saxophone  
Credited as performer (saxophone and piano), creative advisor to Bergonzi, and DVD editor, recorded December, 2011 (will be released by Jazz Heaven, 2014)
- **Commercial CD:** *Dancing Fly Reflections* featuring Dave Santoro, Mikan Zlatkovich, Hamir Atwal, Rick Hollander, Gilbert Castellanos, and Peter Sprague (recorded August 2013, forthcoming release)
- **Commercial DVD:** *Jerry Bergonzi-Creating Your Own Vocabulary, vols. 1-2*  
Credited as performer (saxophone and piano), creative advisor to Bergonzi, and DVD editor, recorded May, 2010 (Publisher: Jazz Heaven, 2012)  
(This is a commercial series of three DVDs authored by acclaimed saxophonist, Jerry Bergonzi.)
- **Commercial CD:** *Brian Levy Plays*, released in November, 2010  
Includes original compositions and jazz standards and features James Oblon, Jared Gold, Mark Ferber, Mikan Zlatkovic, and Hogyu Hwang

### **Committee Membership and Leadership**

- Chair of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee (2022-2023)
- Fulbright Program Advisor (2022-2023)
- Doctoral Committee (Current, since 2015)
- Chair of the Graduate Curriculum Committee (2018-2019)
- Faculty Advisory Committee (2018-2021)
- Graduate Curriculum Committee (2016-2018)
- Vice-Chair of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee (Current, since 2015)
- Fulbright Committee (2015)
- Undergraduate Curriculum Committee at NEC (2013 – 2015)



**Board Membership**

Jazz Boston board member (2014 – 2017)

**Languages**

English (native), German

**Saxophone Mentors**

Jerry Bergonzi (2003-2006)

David Liebman (2000-2003)

Dick Oatts (2001-2003)

David Santoro (2000-2003)

**Brian Levy's References**

**Dr. Eric Chafe** (Retired Professor, Musicology)

Department: Musicology

Affiliation: Brandeis University

Phone: 617-916-5286 Email: [chafe@brandeis.edu](mailto:chafe@brandeis.edu)

**Thomas Novak** (Former President and Provost of New England Conservatory of Music)

Affiliation: New England Conservatory

Phone: (917)-449-6081 Email: [Thomas.W.Novak@gmail.com](mailto:Thomas.W.Novak@gmail.com)

**Dr. Greg Smith** (Retired Faculty, Music History and Musicology)

Department: Music History and Musicology

Affiliation: New England Conservatory

Phone: 617-266-2716 Email: [greusmith@verizon.net](mailto:greusmith@verizon.net)

**Dr. Keith Waters** (Full Professor, Music Theory)

Department: Music Theory

Affiliation: University of Colorado at Boulder

Phone: 720-620-3384 Email: [Keith.Waters@colorado.edu](mailto:Keith.Waters@colorado.edu)