

December 18, 2020



Dear CT Northern Region Musician, **Mr. Sherman Irby:**

Thank you for your hard work and dedication in preparing an audition for the CMEA Northern Region Jazz Band! Your commitment to your art shines even stronger as you persevere during this pandemic. Although we can't hold a traditional festival this year, there will be the opportunity to participate in a virtual workshop on Saturday, January 16th at 11 am.

This workshop will be led by the lead alto of the Jazz @ Lincoln Center Orchestra, Mr. Sherman Irby. Mr. Irby was born and raised in Tuscaloosa, Alabama and found his musical calling at age 12. In high school, he played and recorded with gospel immortal James Cleveland. Mr. Irby went on to graduate from Clark Atlanta University and soon after joined Johnny O'Neal's Atlanta based quintet. In 1994, Mr. Irby moved to New York City, began recording on Blue Note records, and played with many greats including Roy Hargrove and Elvin Jones. Mr. Irby has played lead alto for J@LC since 2005 and left Blue Note to form his own record label, Black Warrior Records. Sherman Irby is an incredibly powerful and soulful improviser. We are lucky to have him lead this workshop on improvisation and authentic Blues vocabulary!

**PREPARATION & EQUIPMENT:** This workshop will be participatory. Please select a space where you can play your instrument and be sure to warm up in advance. It is recommended that students have a way to play and improvise over an audible backing track. Please reach out to your director, and then me as ensemble co-chair, if this is a barrier for you. If a specific backing track is required, I will send that out electronically to your director in advance of the workshop.

**WORKSHOP DRESS:** Please be sure to dress professionally for this virtual workshop. "Business casual" is recommended. Do follow your school's dress code.

**LINK:** The workshop link will be sent to your director by Thursday, January 14th.

If you have any questions, please email Mr. Antonucci or me in advance of the workshop.

Best,

Rachel Antonucci James Antonucci  
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