



“When I hear the impassioned and visceral voice of Billie Holiday, John Coltrane’s crying yet shining sound, or Ornette Coleman’s revolutionary spirit, I learn something about their character embedded in their music. In this tradition, I seek to be vulnerable and to allow others to hear my take on the world with my sound, improvisations, and compositions. My mission is to use my gifts of perception and expression to show that a life of love, selflessness, and humility towards others and towards the Earth is both enduring and fulfilling.”

Austin Zhang is a New York City/Dallas based band leader, composer, and saxophonist. As a young student, Zhang was selected as a member of several national programs including the Vail Jazz Workshop, National YoungArts Foundation, Jazz Band of America, Berklee Global Jazz Workshop, Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Summer Jazz Academy, and TMEA All-State Jazz Ensembles. During this time, he had the opportunity to perform with George Garzone at the Newport Jazz Festival, Lewis Nash and John Clayton at the Vail Jazz Festival, Steve Wilson at the Music for All National Festival and to study with figures like Wynton Marsalis, George Garzone, Danilo Perez, Dick Oatts, and Ted Nash.

In addition to his performing experience, Zhang takes great pride in the non-profit organization he helped develop in 2014. This organization, named [Music Above All](#), is a 501©3 non-profit that donates musical instruments to families and schools, volunteer music lessons at the Wesley Rankin Community Center in West Dallas, and free concerts for disadvantaged students and communities.

Zhang is currently studying at the Manhattan School of Music, in one of the most significant locations in the history of jazz: Harlem. There, he has been immersed in music, history, and culture, working alongside incredible young artists and studying with world-renowned professors (namely, [Jaleel Shaw](#) and [Stefon Harris](#)). Through various Manhattan School of Music ensembles, he been also able to perform with Stefon Harris, Paquito D’Rivera, Joe Lovano, John Beasley, and Marc Cary.

More recently, Zhang’s seriousness and dedication to the music has helped him perform with Wycliffe Gordon, Terri Lyne Carrington, and Mino Cinelu. He was recognized as an outstanding performer in the 2017 Essentially Ellington competition and has performed with the Essentially Ellington Alumni big band at Jazz at Lincoln Center every year since. In 2018, he had a monthly residency in the Bar Next Door Emerging Artist Series and wrote a [piece](#) dedicated to Joaquin “Guac” Oliver, a victim of the senseless Parkland, Florida school shooting. He also led an opening performance for Adam Larson’s band through the Jazz Exchange and frequently performs with the Nate Sparks Big Band at Dizzy’s Club in Jazz at Lincoln Center. In 2019, he started [The](#)

[Beehive Quartet](#), a chordless quartet that aims to celebrate individualism and challenge fundamentals that choke rather than push musical boundaries.

Reaching past his musical aptitude, Zhang is a socially conscious and perceptive citizen of the world. He is constantly studying the history of racism and social inequality in America, the roots of where jazz music truly spawned from. He understands that the incredible level of expression achieved by artists like Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Stevie Wonder, and Marvin Gaye comes not just from musical ability but from an inconceivable level of authenticity. Zhang is passionate about living with respect to people, animals, and the planet and uses his platform as an artist to advocate for social equity, veganism, environmental protection, and conscious living.

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