

Jazzing it up at local high schools

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ADRIAN ALLEYNE [Enlarge Image](#)

The Tara Richardson Quartet performing for students at College Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

Most people can only dream of meeting a Juno-nominated musician after listening to him or her play live. But a few lucky Transcona students lived that dream last week.

Students from Transcona Collegiate Institute and College Pierre Elliott Trudeau were treated to a workshop with the Tara Davidson Quartet on March 8.

The group is on a cross-Canada tour, and has included workshops with local schools into its schedule.

Music students taking part said it was great to hear from someone who has made it in the jazz world.

"I like listening to people who have a lot of experience, and a lot of stuff to share. Obviously she wants to help us," said CPET Grade 10 student Lauren Hadaller.

For Glenn Radley, a Grade 12 CPET student, it was nice to see someone who's actually doing what she loves. Radley plans on pursuing jazz as a career.

Brady Gill, music teacher at CPET, thinks the workshop was a tremendous opportunity for his students. "It's great. The kids would not go out and hear jazz otherwise, so if we can bring it to them that's great," Gill said.

"It is a big deal. For the parents and staff, maybe it's more of a big deal because they know what that means. For the kids, it's an adult who does what they're doing but at a professional level."

During this tour the quartet has been stopping at universities and colleges, but likes to stop at the high schools as well.

"We're totally happy to do it. Hopefully they like it, and I know for myself when visiting artists came through my high school and played it was inspirational," said Davidson, a Toronto-based saxophonist whose 2008 album, Code Breaking, was nominated for that year's best traditional jazz album Juno Award.

"Maybe it will make a positive impression."

At the workshop, students heard the quartet play, and were then able to ask questions about their music. Davidson writes all of her own compositions and likes to share her writing process with the younger musicians.

"I had great exposure to jazz music at an early age, so it wasn't hard to grasp," Davidson said.

"It's creatively so open because jazz has a strong tradition behind it."

She hopes the kids will be able to take away the fact that jazz can be fun, and they can make a living out of it too if they want.

"Jazz is not a hard-to-grasp concept, you don't have to get it intellectually. If it moves you somehow, then that's worth looking into," she said.

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