Columbia Hosts Jam Session, Lecture For Six Ukranian Jazz Musicians

By KATIE MOORE

Columbia recently hosted a group of six Ukranian jazz professionals and musicians interested in the music department’s approach to teaching jazz as part of a four-city US tour sponsored by the U.S. State Department. Ukranian music scholars attended a lecture given by Columbia’s Director of the Louis Armstrong Jazz Performance Program Chris Washburne and performed a jam session with one of the university’s talented jazz ensembles.

The State Department’s Kennedy Center Jazz Ambassadors Program, which sends American jazz musicians on concert tours in foreign countries, “has been expanded to provide delegates from overseas with an opportunity to experience American society and culture,” explained Washburne. “Jazz is seen as a metaphor for American democracy, and yet today it is no longer just an American phenomenon. Its rhythm, theory, and artistic transcend many borders. It’s really global music.”

The group of six international visionaries, all from Ukraine, met with students and faculty at Columbia, the University of Maryland, and Skidmore College for several weeks in December.

“The jam session will enable an exchange of ideas between the two countries,” said Washburne.

From left: Columbia College Dean Austin Quigley, Cheryl Milstein, Morris Milstein, Larry Milstein, Philip Milstein, Vivian Milstein, President Bollinger and Abigail Elbaum.