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To Whom It May Concern:

It is a pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Michael Smolens and his earPlay Jazzquintet. Michael completed both the Orff Schulwerk Level I training at Mills College and my Jazz and Orff Schulwerk Course. It was humbling for me to teach such an accomplished musician, but I believe both experiences helped sharpen his intuitive sense of how to involve children (and adults) in music-making in a way that has carried over in his concert lecture demonstrations. Michael returned twice to my jazz course to present his ensembles and was enthusiastically received both times.

The greatest strength of his presentation is the quality of the music itself. The group consists of extremely talented musicians playing a wide variety of intriguing instruments in an equally wide variety of styles. His recent show also includes a mesmerizing blend of music, poetry and magic. Michael and all of his musicians are articulate about their instruments, the styles they play, the cultural background that informs the pieces and the very process of playing together. This makes for an engaging and informative experience for children and adults alike.

In an educational climate in which many children have little or no contact with the arts, experiences like this can open doors for a child and change his or her life. I give it my strongest recommendation.

Sincerely yours,

*Doug Goodkin*

Doug Goodkin: Author, Educator, Orff Schulwerk teacher