

# German Jazz Connections



*Kurt Maas '65*



*Claus Reichstaller (left) and Camilo Dornier '81*

After a decrease in Berklee applicants from Germany, Damien Bracken, Berklee's dean of enrollment, reached out to German-born pianist **Cornelius Kreusch '94**. They formulated ideas to create events to spark greater awareness of Berklee among young German musicians. To start, Bracken and the admissions team booked a concert featuring a Berklee all-star group and auditions in Ottobrunn, a suburb outside Munich. "Locating our auditions in a central hub like Munich made it very accessible to our applicants," Bracken says. "That effort resulted in 12 students enrolling the following year."

At the sold-out concert, Bracken met German alumnus, **Camilo Dornier '81**. During the 1970s, Dornier (a pianist), found few solid educational opportunities to study jazz in his home country, and at the urging of his teacher, **Kurt Maas '65**, he came to Berklee to study jazz arranging and composition. "I took Herb Pomeroy's Line Writing and Duke Ellington courses, which were great," Dornier says. "Herb was my favorite teacher." Dornier also cites his piano teacher Ray Santisi and Phil Wilson as influential.

Upon graduating, Dornier returned to Germany and began working as a musician performing throughout Europe. But he also had a strong interest in the aerospace business his family operates in Germany and later decided to enter that industry. He returned to America and enrolled at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, FL, where he earned an MBA in aviation management in 1984. After a stint at Boeing in Seattle, WA, Dornier returned to Germany to work with his family. He currently heads his own investment firm.

Dornier has little time to play music these days, but he has become

an active supporter of jazz education in Germany and of Berklee. He decided to honor the legacy of his late teacher Kurt Maas, who was a major force in jazz education and music publishing in Germany until his passing in 2011. Through a special arrangement forged with Berklee founder Lawrence Berk in 1969, Maas began publishing jazz education materials and big-band charts, which were in high demand but scarce supply in Germany at the time.

Dornier and renowned German jazz trumpeter Claus Reichstaller (chair of the jazz institute at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Munich) teamed to establish the Kurt Maas Jazz Award. Dornier has funded prizes to be presented biennially to three top music students from the jazz institute. The top prize provides tuition for a student to attend Berklee's Five-Week Summer Performance program. The second prize is a booking at a top Munich jazz club, and the third prize sends a student to the jazz master's workshop established by Reichstaller at the International Jazz Academy Burghausen.

The first round of award winners were announced in early 2013 and trumpeter and jazz composer Matthias Lindermayr won the top prize. Since his 2013 summer at Berklee, Lindermayr was awarded a full Berklee scholarship and became a full-time Berklee student this semester. "After meeting Matthias," Dornier says, "Damien [Bracken] called me and said, 'Send me more of these guys!' Claus and I never dreamt that this would happen for the first recipient of the award. We are really happy for Matthias."

In February 2015, the second round of winners of the Kurt Maas Jazz Award will be announced.