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To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write this college recommendation for Rocco Rizzi. Rocco has been a student in the Berkeley High jazz program, of which I am the director, for 3+ years, and is currently the bassist in our top group, one of the best high school big bands in the nation. He also gigs all over town with a number of student-led combos.

Rocco is a unique artist who is well on his way to becoming a top bassist and songwriter. He is a highly developed acoustic bassist who can carry a band with his great feel, superb time, solid intonation, and strong voice leading. As a member of the group improvisation that is the jazz rhythm section, Rocco plays with sensitivity and big ears, and uses the entire range of the instrument to create interesting bass lines that feed ideas to the rest of the players.

While Rocco is an outstanding acoustic bassist, he is a generational talent on electric bass. His funk bass lines are authentic, creative, highly energized, and can transport the whole band into a funk universe. He understands that in this genre the bass is the star, and never fails to rise to the occasion. He is an outstanding soloist who plays with great feel and electrifies audiences with his technical prowess and emotional range. He constantly explores new sonic possibilities, and has an intuitive feel for how to capture the musical moment. Rocco is a beast in the practice room – he spends every waking moment working on music – from listening to a new album every single day, to constantly composing new songs, to practicing the bass to the point of exhaustion ... his whole life is organized around the act of creating music.

As a songwriter, Rocco is already garnering attention from big players in the music industry. He has composed constantly since he was very young, and is visited by an endless supply of creative ideas. His compositions range from pop to hip hop to jazz to experimental, classically influenced techno – genre defying. He collaborates with a wide variety of international artists. He is proficient at the use of technology / music production software. In this day and age a lot of young people tinker with creating music on their laptops, but in Rocco's case it's only a matter of time before this 17 year old breaks through with some major hits. The musicians who have influenced him the most underscore the breadth of his listening, and include Miles Davis, David Bowie, Bootsy Collins, John McLaughlin, Stevie Wonder, John Zorn, Steve Reich, Nick Drake, Thundercat, The Microphones, Will Lee, and Michael Jackson.

As a person, Rocco is creative, intelligent, passionate, ambitious, kind, hard-working, self motivated, easy to work with, and supportive of others. He is very well liked, and makes friends easily. He has experienced a lot of hardship in his life, and has learned to express his heartbreak through music, while dedicating himself to becoming a force for kindness in the world.

Berkeley High School's jazz education program is one of the best in the nation, and the list our many top professional alumni includes Joshua Redman, Ambrose Akinmusire, Benny Green, Dayna Stephens, Peter Apfelbaum, Craig Handy, Steven Bernstein, Hitomi Oba, Paul Hanson, Billy Buss, and Elena Pinderhughes, in addition to countless others. In the not very distant future, that list will also include songwriter and bassist Rocco Rizzi. There is no question in my mind that Rocco will be a great asset to any college music program lucky enough to attract him, and I recommend him highly and without reservation. I also suggest you do everything in your power to recruit him. I believe his work ethic and musical abilities have no limitations. If you have any questions about Rocco, please feel free to contact me at the email address above.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Cline  
Jazz Program Director  
Berkeley High School