



Press Release

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Roland and Berklee College of Music Bring Hardware-Based Music Production in the Classroom for 404 Day Celebration



The event highlights Berklee's in-demand SP-404 Lab course and the growing role of sampling culture in music education.

Boston, MA, March 30, 2026 — [Roland Corporation](#) and [Berklee College of Music](#) are spotlighting the growing role of hardware-based beat production in higher education through a collaborative 404 Day activation on April 3, 2026. The event brings together Berklee's Electronic Production & Design community with industry mentors to explore how beat culture and sampling technology are shaping contemporary music creation, with a special appearance from Stones Throw recording artist Koreatown Oddity, a Los Angeles-based rapper and producer known for his distinctive sample-driven sound.

At the heart of this partnership is Berklee's SP-404 Lab course, which debuted in spring 2025 and has quickly become one of the college's most sought-after electives, with a growing waitlist of students eager to engage with hardware-based production. This success validates what underground producers and educators have long known: rhythm culture and hardware fluency

are central to contemporary music creation. The partnership demonstrates how manufacturers and educators must work together to shape curricula that reflect real-world production practices.

As a global music technology company with a deep commitment to innovation, Roland extends its work beyond product development into education. By staying connected to culture, the company develops tools that resonate authentically with both artists and educators. Roland's approach is rooted in the belief that real innovation comes from understanding how music is made at every level.

“The SP-404 is an instrument of music production; it contains sampling, beat making, and remixing, but it's playable like a guitar or piano,” said Jared Selter, Director of Education at Roland. “Seeing the next generation engage with this instrument in a formal educational setting validates how essential hardware fluency has become to contemporary music creation.”

For Berklee, embracing hardware-based production as a formal curriculum anchor reflects the institution's evolution alongside the industry, preparing students for careers where hardware literacy is essential.

“Berklee is embracing the electronic musician, the DJ, and the producer, carving out real space for them,” said Michele Darling, Chair of Electronic Production and Design at Berklee. “The SP-404 Lab is evidence of how we stay grounded in the culture while maintaining rigorous academic standards.”

David Bellow, who teaches the SP-404 Lab course and is a respected lo-fi artist known as Lightfoot, emphasizes the pedagogical power of the instrument. “It's been fascinating to break this machine down because it's so specific and adaptable to how everybody creates,” he explains. “The students show a tremendous amount of enthusiasm. I see a different side of them as they interact with this hardware.”

The 404 Day activation on April 3 exemplifies a broader shift in music education. As institutions recognize that beat culture and hardware-based production are no longer niche but foundational to contemporary music making, the Roland-Berklee partnership demonstrates how deep collaboration between manufacturers and educators shapes the tools, thinking, and skills that define the next generation of music creators. The day's workshops, mentorship, and performance opportunities connect Berklee students directly with industry professionals and celebrate beat culture at the intersection of underground practice and formal education.

Event Schedule

April 3, 2026 | Berklee College Campus, Boston

- **2–4 p.m.: Koreatown Oddity Artist Talk & Workshop** (B-41 Berklee Performance Center) – Stones Throw recording artist shares workflows, production insights, and the artistic journey of an independent producer shaping beat culture

- **5–6 p.m.: Roland Product Specialist Workshop & Gear Demo** (ITL Room) – Roland Product Specialist Jay Ybarra demonstrates SP-404MKII features with hands-on exploration
- **6–9 p.m.: Student Beat Battle** (Room 22-112 Auditorium) – Berklee students compete in a beat-making competition with Koreatown Oddity as host

“What I love about the 404 is the convenience it gives me in being creative,” said Koreatown Oddity, a Los Angeles-based rapper, producer, and filmmaker whose deeply personal approach to beat-making has made him a respected figure in underground hip-hop. “Its portability frees me up to continue or start ideas wherever I go. It takes batteries, so I can go to one of my favorite gardens and work on music outside under some trees in the sun.”

“Also, once I record any sample into a pad, it saves immediately to the 404,” he continued. “I don't have to name samples or do any extra steps to make sure my sounds will be there once I turn the machine off. That really makes it fun for me when I'm in the zone sampling like crazy, to not have to trip about doing any tedious tasks during my process. I can just get straight to work. The 404's user-friendliness allows students to pick up the machine's basics in the classroom and then take them out into the world to practice what they've learned.”



FRIDAY
APRIL 3, 2026
2-9 PM

1140 BOYLSTON
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COME
CELEBRATE
404 DAY
WITH
ROLAND
AND
BERKLEE

2-4 PM @ B41
Workshop and Talk

5-6 PM @ ITL
Petting Zoo

6-9 PM @ 22-112
Beat Battle

SPECIAL GUEST
KOREATOWN ODDITY
OF STONES THROW
RECORDS

Roland Berklee

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Educators interested in incorporating hardware-based beat production and sampling into their curriculum are encouraged to contact Roland at rc-edu@roland.com to learn more about bringing the SP-404 Lab course model to their institutions. For more information on 404 Day celebrations globally, visit https://www.roland.com/us/promos/roland_sp-404/.

About Roland Corporation

For more than 50 years, Roland's innovative electronic musical instruments and multimedia products have fueled inspiration in artists and creators around the world. Embraced by hobbyists and professionals alike, the company's trendsetting gear spans multiple categories, from pianos, synthesizers, guitar products, drum and percussion products, DJ controllers, audio/video solutions, gaming mixers, livestreaming products, and more. As technology evolves, Roland and its expanding family of brands, including BOSS, V-MODA, Drum Workshop (DW), PDP, Latin Percussion (LP), and Slingerland, continue to lead the way for music makers and

creators, providing modern solutions and seamless creative workflows between hardware products, computers, and mobile devices. For more information, visit [Roland.com](https://roland.com) or see your local Roland dealer. Follow Roland on [Facebook](#), X ([@RolandGlobal](#)), and Instagram ([@RolandGlobal](#)).

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