



THE SACRAMENTO JAZZ JUBILEE EXPERIENCE

Thanks to all of you in the Denver Jazz Club, close to \$4000 was contributed to our Youth All-Stars since the band was created in October, 2009.

On Thursday, May 27th the band boarded a plane at DIA for the jazz festival performance experience of a lifetime! Since our senior tenor saxophonist, Armando, was graduating on Friday, the band had to perform without him during the first day of the Jubilee. At 11:45am the DJC Youth All-Stars, balancing on the bed of a truck, performed in the Annual Sacramento Jazz Jubilee Parade. Since the band has 20 tunes memorized, this performance was relatively easy for us. However, when the truck drove over the cobblestone street towards the last part of the parade, it was quite a challenge for us to maintain balance and keep performing! Ray and Rebecca did a great job holding down the rhythm section playing their washboards!! Mike Johnson's (Your Fathers Mustache Band) work with the two of them in advance of the Jubilee certainly paid off.

Our first youth set was at the Delta King Paddlewheel Saloon. Lance Christensen (trumpet) and Mat Aschenberg (clarinet), from the 101st Colorado National Guard Army Dixieland Band, sat in with our band for a portion of the set. The band was received extremely well by the audience. In all my previous Jubilee experiences with youth bands, that opening set usually lacks energy, but the All-Stars had a terrific start!

We then attended Bob Draga's (Sacramento Jazz Jubilee Emperor and Clarinetist), set with several other professional all-star musicians. Ray, our drummer, was selected to be an apprentice with Bob at Saturday evening's Hyatt Ballroom set, so we wanted to try to meet him in advance. Ray and our entire band sat in awe over the musicality and technical abilities of these incredible musicians! At the end of the set Ray and I talked to Bob about the upcoming apprentice event. He was very nice to give Ray some suggestions and told me that he would see if he could possibly feature all of our Denver Jazz Club Youth All-Stars at the end of the set.

The band then took the shuttle over to Betty's Bistro in the Convention Center. We had a good performance, but only for about 15 people in a venue that could accommodate several hundred! We then got to hear the wonderful Cornet Chop Suey Band in the Yolo Room. Following that set, the band walked over to the Sheraton Grand Nave Ballroom. I talked with Lance of the 101st Army Dixieland Band and asked him to put us on the very end of the set, since Armando had a flight to Sacramento after his graduation. I knew it would be tight, but we were all hoping he could make this pro set. Lance said that the best he could do was to put us on at about 10:35pm. The band sat together and were crossing all their fingers and toes, hoping that the Jazz Express (the Jubilee's musician shuttle) would get Armando to our performance in time. With 5 minutes to spare, Armando came running into the Sheraton Ballroom with luggage, clarinet and saxophone! I had told him to wear his band outfit on the plane so he would be all ready to go. The band ended up having the best performance of the day, including an 11pm playing of the "Army Song" (which we didn't know) with the 101st Dixieland Band!

Saturday was an unbelievable performance day for us. We drew a crowd at the Family Stage at our 10am set. At this point of the Jubilee we started hearing more and more people talk about the high quality of our youth band. There were only 2 other youth bands who performed from memory. People were starting to ask where and when our next performances would be. 101st had invited us to perform with them at the Firehouse Lot. There were several hundred people in the audience and after starting on stage, both bands marched around the entire audience playing "Saints" – what a kick!! We headed over to the Holiday Inn Ballroom where the All-Star Banjo Jam was to take place. Alex ended up being featured on "Bill Bailey," along with some of the best banjo players in the world - Eddie Erickson was one of them!

Armando was also selected to be an apprentice at the Jubilee. He was featured with Big Mama Sue's Trio at the Paddlewheel Saloon. He did a wonderful job calling out the tunes, playing the melodies, soloing, and calling out the other soloists. Armando came off as the terrific Pro we all know – we were all bubbling with pride at that set! The whole band then joined in for a couple of tunes with Armando and the Trio. Everyone had a blast – especially the audience!!

The Jazz Express then transferred us to the Hyatt Ballroom where Bob Draga was performing with some other all-star pros. They had started already, and we noticed that the Hyatt Ballroom seats 1300 and it was full! After a few songs I brought Ray down to the side stage and Bob Draga came over and greeted us. He coordinated with Ray, mentioning that he really didn't know any of Ray's song choices. But he said he would make it work. They played "That's a Plenty," featuring Ray on a very long, open drum solo. I've never heard him play better! All 1300 people gave him a standing ovation!! Then, towards the end of the set, the stage attendant found me and told us to get to the stage. Bob featured our youth band on "Royal Garden Blues." Our kids sounded fantastic! All 1300 audience members gave us a standing ovation – what a thrill!!

Sunday started out with a youth set in the Paddlewheel Saloon. We invited Dr. Bach to join us on cornet, since we were going to perform with his band later in the day. I didn't know he was 82 years old, but when the kids did their low choreography move, Dr. Bach laid down on the floor! The only problem was that he couldn't get back up without Molly's help!! The band had a great time playing with him – he was so impressed with their soloing skills.

We headed over to the Golden Eagle Room in the afternoon to perform with Dr. Bach and the Jazz Practitioners. It was so much fun – they had us join them for 2 songs and the crowd went wild! We then had a youth set at Round Table Pizza, which was a lot of fun. At 7pm we joined the 101st on the Family Stage. They were amazed by Matt's clarinet and Alex's tuba solos on "High Society!" The 2 bands marched around the crowd, playing "Saints," at the end of the set – the audience loved it!!

Then we headed over to the jam session in the pizza place. They never got to our kids, but we were allowed to perform on stage after the jam session concluded. The crowd loved it, playing our washboards, marching around the restaurant, and dancing at times. After about a half hour, our kids wanted more. We ended up playing on the street with a couple of musicians from another youth band, "The Raisin Babies." A crowd of about 100 stood and watched our band! Alex put out his banjo case and the kids ended up with a pot of \$30!! What a fun Sunday!!!

We put together a superset (our favorite 10 tunes) for our final youth performance at the Round Table Pizza on Monday morning. The place filled up more at the end of the set, which made it fun for us. The band loaded the shuttle and we transferred to the Sheraton Grand Nave Ballroom for Rebecca and Ray to perform in the World Famous Washboard Concert. They performed with Mike Johnson, Big Mama Sue, and Ralf Reynolda, among others! They both took great solos – the crowd loved it!

The Jazz Express picked us up at our hotel to take us to the airport. As we were going along our students asked the driver if she could possibly stop at In-N-Out Burger for dinner. They explained that then their trip to California would be complete! The driver radioed the other 2 drivers and we all got to enjoy a true California burger experience before our flight home.

I would like to especially thank Paul and Nona Chamberlain, and John and Dottie Sobott, for being at so many of our Youth All-Star performances in Sacramento. You guys are great!!