



The Evergreen Rag

an occasional publication of the Evergreen Jazz Festival

Fall 2007

Festival Hits a High Note



The sixth rendition of the Evergreen Jazz Festival, held July 27–29, was another musical marvel, with ten outstanding bands providing 75 hours of great live jazz.

“This is a wonderful event and a pleasure to attend,” wrote one fan on the audience questionnaire. “I have family who travel from out of state to attend.”

“I’m happy this has been successful,” wrote another. “It’s been a great party, and we thank you for putting it together!”

Added another happy jazz fan, “We enjoyed every delightful minute. We’ll be back next year.”

And, “I hope this festival keeps happening for the next 100 years!”

Evergreen favorite, James Dapogny’s Chicago Jazz Band, performs at the inimitable Little Bear saloon.

All photographs courtesy of Linda Kirkpatrick.

So do we! For the more than 100 board members and volunteers who make the festival happen, it is a true labor of love, and it is indeed gratifying to see the event grow each year and generate so much audience enthusiasm.

Hundreds of survey respondents also let us know who their favorite bands are – all of them! It seems that every band should be invited back, including several who weren’t in the lineup this year. It’s wonderful to know that the groups we bring in are so popular, but of course, it also makes it difficult for the Festival Music Committee to introduce a new band or two each year.

But when they do, the reaction is “More!” That was certainly the case this year with After Midnight. Their authentic Benny Goodman Sextet sound had the packed house at the church on its feet and cheering. First-timers the Don Stiernberg Quartet were also a huge hit, adding a surprising bit of variety with Don’s amazing mandolin.

Meanwhile, old favorites such as James Dapogny’s Chicago Jazz Band, Celebration Jazz Band and Queen City Jazz Band delighted the largest audience in Festival history.

2007 Highlights

In keeping with the personality of jazz, it seems that every year there are wonderful, often spontaneous moments that add so much to the Festival.

- Three clarinets? It happened on Sunday when After Midnight's Roger Campbell and Joe Lukasic from Independence Hall joined Bill Pontarelli and the Celebration Jazz Band for an impromptu number. Leader Bob Cooke lamented, "There's just no way to control clarinetists."
- Ever the innovator, Jim Dapogny had his front row play a chorus alone. While the four are all great musicians and it was an interesting idea, there was no room for doubt as to

Evergreen's beautiful summer weather makes for a packed patio at the Elks Lodge.

the importance of the rhythm section.

- Chicago native Don Stiernberg announced that the group was about to play a true Chicago blues tune and then swung into "Take Me Out to the Ball Game."
- Student musicians from the Festival workshops sat in with their instructors from the Queen City Jazz Band on Sunday and received a standing "O" from the appreciative Elks Patio audience.
- Piano greats John Sheridan and Jim Dapogny shared the keyboard at the Little Bear on Saturday afternoon for an incredible four-hands performance.
- Sergeant Brenden Anderson requisitioned the microphone during the Sunday gospel service and asked Janet Rodriguez to marry him! She accepted

on the spot, and the ceremony is planned for December. Sergeant Anderson will then head to Afghanistan for a six-month deployment. The couple intends to make the Festival an annual celebration of their engagement, and we look forward to welcoming them back!

2008 Preview

The 2008 Festival will take place July 25–27, and many of this year's bands will be returning. In addition, we're delighted to announce the Evergreen debut of Hal's Angels led by drummer Hal Smith and featuring Festival favorite Carl Sonny Leyland on piano. You're sure to love 'em!

Also appearing will be Gremoli, back after a two-year absence. The group suffered a tragic loss with the death of leader Ron Going,





Queen City Jazz Band has attendees up and dancing at the Elks Lodge ballroom.

but they're still delivering their big, crowd-pleasing New Orleans sound.

Check the Festival website at www.evergreenjazz.org for the latest developments for 2008. There are a couple of new twists in the works that you'll want to know about!

Where's CanUS?

More than a few attendees asked about the absence of the popular British Columbia group CanUS. We hoped they'd be back, too, but following heart surgery in early 2006, leader Toni Blodgett made the decision that her travel days are over. Fortunately she's

made a strong recovery, but the group is limiting performances to its Vancouver/Victoria home. Definitely our loss, but what a great added reason to visit a beautiful place!

What Happened to Whit?

Whit Smith's Hot Jazz Caravan was arguably the smash hit of the 2006 Festival. Their Western Swing added a new dimension to the Festival sound spectrum, and audiences seemingly couldn't get enough. We certainly wanted them back for '07, but scheduling and personal circumstances simply

made it impossible. The Music Committee is staying in touch with Whit, and hopefully there will be a return in '08.



With Doug Finke on trombone, Independence Hall Jazz Band filled the the Evergreen hills with the sound of music.

Festival Volunteers Rock!



Our marvelous corps of some 100 volunteers does an amazing job of helping attendees and handling all manner of questions and problems. One this year was truly classic.

A lady came to the ticket table and asked when Wynton Marsalis was performing. When told he wasn't appearing, she insisted he was and said it was in the program. The volunteer realized what she had read was that one of the musicians had performed with Marsalis and went on to explain, "Look at this one. He performed with Ella Fitzgerald. She's not going to be here either!"

What can we say? Our volunteers really do rock ... um ... make that "swing"!

On a Serious Note

Fund raising is a never-ending battle for the Festival, as we work to break even while bringing you these great musicians and an outstanding event. That's why we continue to emphasize that ticket sales only cover a little more than half of Festival expenses. Sponsors and grants help considerably, but contributions from individuals like you are what finally make the difference.

If you already are a regular contributor, thank you again! If not, won't you please do what you can to help keep the Festival alive and healthy? You can mail your tax-deductible check to

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Thank you!

*"To jazz or not to jazz? There is no question."
Louis Armstrong*

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