

Clark Jazz Heats Up Colorado



Big Band Outstanding Musician awardee James Powers featured with the Clark College Jazz Ensemble in the Hensel Phelps Theater at the University of Northern Colorado/Greeley Jazz Festival. *Photo courtesy of Richard Inouye.*

For the second year in a row, Clark College Jazz Ensemble students have received top honors at the annual University of Northern Colorado/Greeley Jazz Festival.

This year, Clark students participated in two categories: big band and combo. Recognized from the 7500 festival participants representing seven states and West Germany, five Clark students received Special Citation for Outstanding Musicianship awards. Outstanding musicianship awards for the big band category were presented to David Floratos on saxophone, James Powers on trombone, and Antonio Pickett on drums. Outstanding musicianship awards for combo went to the

entire group: David Floratos on saxophone, James Powers on trombone, Jade Denny on bass, and Micah Richie on drums.

The largest event of its kind in the nation, the UNC/Greeley Jazz Festival brings together internationally recognized artists, jazz lovers, award-winning clinicians, and more than 250 college, high school, and middle school big bands, combos, and jazz vocal groups. This year's festival, its 44th, was held April 24 through 26.

In addition to performing for adjudication by internationally recognized jazz educators, Clark students also had the opportunity to listen to performances and clinics presented by world-renowned professional jazz artists including Wayne Shorter and renowned Jamey Aebersold, both of whom have been designated as Jazz Masters by the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as bassist and three-time Grammy winner Christian McBride.



Jenny Baird, *right*.
Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Music major Dakota Luu said that the Colorado trip—his first—enhanced his education at Clark. “The recent jazz tour to Colorado has changed my musicality in ways that wouldn’t be possible just by staying local to Vancouver,” he said. “Being

around the quality of musicians found during the festival and having the opportunity to hear great musicians like Wayne Shorter and Christian McBride is not quantifiable.”

Clark student Jenny Baird called the opportunity to attend an event of this magnitude a life-changing experience. “The Greeley Jazz Festival changed my outlook on jazz music,” she said. “Hearing famous musicians like Christian McBride, Wayne Shorter and the Jeff Hamilton Trio inspired me to become a better musician and pursue music as a major next fall. Being around fellow student jazz musicians and listening to them play makes me understand the beauty of jazz and the dedication it takes to perform it at the levels we heard.”



David Floratos. *Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

Fields scholar David Floratos talked about the inspiration he drew from attending the festival. “I was overwhelmed by the amount of passion that was displayed by the artists who performed there, especially by the Wayne Shorter Quartet, who brought me to tears,” he said. “It has further motivated and inspired me to continue my pursuit of becoming a professional musician and composer.”

Congratulations to all the Clark students who participated and

thanks to everyone at Clark who helped make this opportunity happen!

The Clark College Jazz Band will be performing at the College's third annual Big Band Bash, held Saturday, June 7, at 7 p.m. in Gaiser Student Center. Admission is free and open to the public.