

Clark Jazz never skips a beat



Clark College's Jazz Ensemble performing at the 2016 University of Northern Colorado/Greeley Jazz Festival.

For the third time, the Clark College Jazz Ensemble distinguished themselves among the other colleges and universities representing seven states at the 2016 University of Northern Colorado/Greeley Jazz Festival, held April 21 through 23. This year, eight Clark College Jazz Ensemble students received Special Citation for Outstanding Musicianship awards, recognized from the 8,000 festival participants. The Clark students who received awards were:

- Mattias Tyni – trumpet
- Keith Cheek – tenor saxophone
- Anna James – tenor saxophone
- James Powers – trombone
- Jenny Baird – trombone
- Hayden Lilak – bass
- Josh Gonzales – drums
- Sam Niborg – drums



Clark students
James Powers and
Keith Cheek with
John Clayton,
bassist and
leader of the
Clayton-Hamilton
Orchestra.

In addition to performing for adjudication and clinic from internationally recognized jazz educators, Clark students also had the opportunity to listen to performances, workshops, and panel discussions presented by luminaries in the field of jazz including the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Houston Person, Joey DeFrancesco, and Ellis Marsalis.

"The experience of visiting the Greeley Jazz Festival this year was exhilarating," said Clark student James Powers. "It has been said that it can be disappointing to meet one's heroes, but I can say that that is not always the case. When speaking with some of the learned men of music, I was greeted with humility and kindness. Just as important as the uplifting musical performances, was the realization that these performers were all just regular people who have just practiced more than I have. Overall I would say that as a result of attending the festivities, I have come to several inspiring and informative conclusions about the nature of my craft, and I believe the same can said for my fellow band

members.”



Members of the Clark Jazz Ensemble saxophone pose with iconic saxophonist Houston Person.

Jazz Ensemble Director and music professor Rich Inouye said he could not have been more proud of the band’s performance at the festival. “Many times you work so hard for something like this and when you perform, little mistakes pop up here and there, but this year’s performance at the festival was pure perfection,” he said. “I hope the Clark College community recognizes the work our band students put in to help Clark achieve this distinction. People in the audience shared with me how surprised they were when they found out we were a two-year college! It’s good that the Music Department can represent Clark’s academic distinction at the national level along with programs such as STEM, Speech and Debate, and Journalism.”

UPDATE: Recently, Powers has learned that he has even more reason to be exhilarated: He has been awarded the Festival’s highest award, a tuition scholarship to attend the world-famous Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshop at the University of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky. Powers was recognized as one out of only four recipients to receive this prestigious award from the 8,000 participants who performed at the national jazz festival. Powers is currently a resident of

Gresham, Oregon and he graduated from Heritage High in Vancouver; he plans to complete a transfer degree with a major in music this spring. This award is a first for the Clark Music Department.

The Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshop is recognized as being one of the best intensive programs for mastering jazz improvisation. The festival features the nation's leading jazz educators and performers and is dedicated to providing an intensive learning experience for musicians of all ages and levels. Theory Classes, Ear Training, Combo Performance, and Master Class Sessions allow the opportunity for attendees to grow and develop to their fullest potential, and each evening attendees get to listen to faculty jazz recitals presented by some of the leading jazz musicians from around the world.

Photos: Richard Inouye

This story was contributed by the Music Department.

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.

Notes from the Fest



Clark College Band Director Rich Inouye leads the Clark College Jazz Ensemble at the college's 52nd annual Jazz Festival.

From January 30 through February 1, Gaiser Student Center was swinging with the sounds of big-band jazz during Clark College's renowned Jazz Festival. The event brought 60 jazz bands from middle and high schools around the region to compete in multiple divisions.

But while the sounds were big, some of the musicians were still quite small: The first day of this annual tradition was devoted entirely to middle school performers. Festival director and Clark College music professor Rich Inouye explained the importance of including these young performers in the competition.



Aspire Middle School participates in the Jazz Festival.

“Encouraging jazz performance at the middle-school level is very important to ensuring young people realize how important jazz music is to our culture,” he said. “The style and characteristics of the music promote independence of thought, self-discipline, responsibility, communication, and teamwork, and the festival environment not only allows them to strive for excellence in their performance, but also allows them to listen to the excellence their peers from the other schools represent.”

On Friday night, before the A and AA awards were announced, Inouye gave the gathered competitors another source of inspiration: Before he led the Clark College Jazz Ensemble through their own performance, he introduced his students by name and said which high school each had attended, illustrating how many had come from A and AA schools. The crowd cheered loudly as the names of their schools were mentioned.



This year's Jazz Festival poster and program were designed by Clark College student Luke Acevedo, who is nearing the completion of his Associate of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design at Clark College.

"I have been fortunate to have all the high school directors in the area encourage their students to perform in my bands at Clark," Inouye said later. "I appreciate all the students who have chosen to come to Clark to play in our bands, but in the last couple years I have had the privilege of getting the top musicians from smaller schools in the outlying areas. The Greater Vancouver-area high schools have some of the strongest band programs in the country ... but having been the product of a small, rural school myself, I do have affinity for the smaller, outlying schools. I believe the mix of these students with some of the students from the larger schools is what provides the excitement and distinction for what we do here."

Now in its 52nd year, the Clark College Jazz Festival is one of Southwest Washington's largest jazz festivals. Trophies are presented in all divisions, and individual outstanding musician awards are presented at the end of each day's preliminary competitions. On Saturday evening, the the Dale Beacock Memorial Sweepstakes Award is presented to one outstanding band selected from the entire festival.

For 2014, the Dale Beacock Memorial Sweepstakes trophy was awarded to Garfield High School from Seattle, Washington.

Thursday, January 30, 2014 middle school jazz ensemble finals results:

1st place – Eckstein Middle School from Seattle, Washington

2nd place – Beaumont Middle School from Portland, Oregon

3rd place – Hamilton International Middle School from Seattle, Washington

Special recognition went to Washington Middle School from Seattle, Washington, for being asked to perform in the evening finals.

Outstanding Middle School Jazz Musician certificates were presented to:

Hannah Wells and Joseph Gardner from Aspire Middle School, Lacey, Washington

Milli McFall, Misae Nguyen from Hamilton International Middle School, Seattle, Washington

Brayton Sobolewski and Daniel Conway from Vancouver School of Arts and Academics Middle School, Vancouver, Washington

Eltan Davis and Sammie Wiegand from Beaumont Middle School,

Portland, Oregon

Marco Thompson from Washington Middle School, Seattle, Washington

Kai Despain, Sean Bowman, Julia Tanner, Austin Isgrig, and David Maltby from Eckstein Middle School, Seattle, Washington

Katriana Armstrong and Vanessa Gress from Chief Umtuch Middle School, Battle Ground, Washington

Jerich Embleton from Creswell Middle School, Creswell, Oregon

Shermon Mattson from Pleasant Valley Middle School, Vancouver, WA

Shane Walz, Morgan Kennedy, and Ainsle Cromer from Tukes Valley Middle School, Battle Ground, Washington

Skyler Verity from Laurin Middle School, Vancouver, Washington

Friday, January 31, 2014 A and AA division high school jazz ensemble finals results:

A Division:

1st place – Ridgefield High School Jazz I, Ridgefield, Washington

2nd place – Woodland High School, Woodland, Washington

3rd place – Astoria High School, Astoria, Oregon

AA Division:

1st place – Hockinson High School, Brush Prairie, Washington

2nd place – Fife High School from Tacoma, Washington

3rd place – Washougal High School from Washougal, Washington

Outstanding high school musician awards for the A Division were presented to:

John Mcgee from Philomath High School, Philomath, Oregon

Devin Van Laar from Trout Lake High School, Trout Lake, Washington

Nick Bischoff from Ridgefield High School II, Ridgefield, Washington

Nathan Mitchell and Gabrielle Allegri from Ridgefield High School I, Ridgefield, Washington

Outstanding AA high school musician awards for the AA Division were presented to:

T Anderson from Washougal High School, Washougal, Washington

Erin Jones from Fife High School, Tacoma, Washington

Nathan Nyseth and Lillian Quintana from Hockinson High School, Brush Prairie, Washington

Jack Tietjen from R.A. Long High School, Longview, Washington

Daniel Kransuler and Jenny Kim from Sammamish High School, Bellevue, Washington

Saturday February 1, 2014 AAA and AAAA division high school jazz ensemble finals results:

AAA Division:

1st place – Meadowdale High School from Lynnwood, Washington

2nd place – Mt. Spokane High School from Spokane, Washington

3rd place – Mead High School Jazz I, Spokane, Washington

AAAA Division:

1st place – Garfield High School from Seattle, Washington

2nd place – Battleground High School from Battleground, Washington

3rd place – Union High School from Camas, Washington

Outstanding high school musician awards for the AAA Division were presented to:

Cormac Liotta Sharma from Roosevelt High School II, Seattle, Washington

Ori Levari from Meadowdale High School, Lynnwood, Washington

Andrew Sauage and Travis Widmer from Mt. Spokane High School, Spokane, Washington

Lanie Pham from Battle Ground High School, Battle Ground, Washington

Jorge Marcia from Vancouver School for the Arts and Academics, Vancouver, Washington

Outstanding high school musician awards for the AAAA Division were presented to:

Kaleb Armstrong, Steve Mantecuccio, and Nickolas Schell from Battle Ground High School, Battle Ground, Washington

Devin Perez from West Salem High School, Salem, Oregon

Isak Washuburn-Gaines, Alice Mar-Abe, and Jack Swigget from Garfield High School, Seattle, Washington

Stephen Reid from Union High School Jazz I, Camas, Washington

Jimmy Root from Lake Stevens High School, Lake Stevens, Washington

Shelly Williams contributed to this article.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

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