



Piedmont High School Jazz Band

PIEDMONT JAZZ FESTIVAL

Magic and music on a warm summer day

The 21st Annual Piedmont Jazz Festival filled the city with music and laughter on Sunday, September 19, as local artists shared their talent with an excited and appreciative audience. This year the Piedmont High School Jazz Band, the Bob Roden Quintet, the Albany Big Band, and the Jim Fleser Band took the stage to celebrate Piedmont's commitment to music and jazz innovation.

The Piedmont High School Jazz Band, under the baton of music teacher and director Andria Mullan, opened the festival. The band demonstrated what has become a signature sound of tight horns and lyric rhythm as they moved from the groove of Benny Golson's "The Cool One" to a free form version of Duke's "C Jam Blues" that highlighted

every artist on the stand. The band's Jazz Trio then took over with several smooth Latin tinged pieces including a lyric rendition of "Corcovado".

The Bob Roden Quintet then took the stage and led the audience through a lilting rhythmic set that stretched from ballads to bebop. The Quintet centers on the interplay between the smooth sound of Bob Roden on trombone and the soaring lyricism of Ron Jackson on alto sax. The band explored some of the back pages of the American songbook, including "Exactly Like You" and "Blackbird". In addition the band performed several original pieces such as a Hefti-esque "She Who Makes Happy" and a hard bop, "Penguins of Venus". The Quintet enjoyed the talents of Jaime Dowd on bass and Dave Casini

on drums.

The Albany Jazz Big Band, a Festival fixture for several years, took the stage and swung the audience through a medley of standards with their signature sweet horn sound. To the delight of jazz lovers, the band often takes slow, complex ballads, such as "I've Got the World on a String" and "All The Things You Are" and invigorates them with an up-tempo beat and tight horn charts. This allows soloists to enjoy improvisational chord changes in the context of irresistible classic melodies.

The Jim Fleser Band brought the Festival to a soaring and lyric conclusion. Fronting a tight band of piano, drums and bass, guitarist Fleser led the audience on a spirited journey through the nuances of jazz. Starting with his



Piedmont HS Jazz Trio (Jason Machle, Alex Tafapolsky, Will Davies).

trademark hollow body Gibson, Fleser played Freddie Hubbard's "Red Clay" and Miles Davis' "Flamenco Sketches". The clever choice of these trumpet classics worked well on jazz guitar. Fleser changed mid-set to a solid body instrument and used it to great effect on such Afro Cuban pieces as "Bella" and "Europa". The



Albany Big Band



Jim Fleser Band

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bright triplets and sharp bends of the solid body reminded the audience of the versatility of the electric guitar as a jazz instrument and its ability to move seamlessly from cool jazz to Latin-tinged salsa.

The 21st annual Festival was a wondrous celebration of music and talent in the sunlight of Piedmont Park. After a year of uncertainty, the smiles of the audience and the music in the warm summer air created a magical joy that was inescapable.



Bod Roden Quintet