

Jazz Ensemble Travels to Hampton for Jazz Institute

By Truit O'Neal
Staff Writer

On March 14, 1994, the North Carolina Central University Jazz Ensemble traveled to Hampton, Va., to participate in the Fourth Annual Hampton University/Count Basie Orchestra Jazz Institute.

The Jazz Ensemble came in third place in the institutes' competition. The ensemble lost second place to James Madison and first place Florida A & M.

Hampton Institute is a school with a lot a jazz history. I was so amazed by the campus and Jazz ensembles that I decided to bring forth to the Jazz Scope community some of Hampton's rich jazz history.

While no one can accurately identify a specific date and time for the start of the school's love affair with jazz music, most former students point to the Royal Hamptonians Jazz Combo of the 1920s as a logical starting point.

In 1924, this nine member combo began when Joel Carter ('33) and John R. Robinson ('27) felt that a contemporary dance orchestra was needed on campus to accommodate the expanding musical taste, particularly for campus social affairs. In addition to performing for student and faculty clubs, the Royal Hamptonians enjoyed a two week tour at the school year's conclusion.

The Hamptonians grew both in numbers and national popularity during the late

40s. This 16 piece big band gained its primary strength through the number of seasoned musicians who were returning to school from World War II.

Their prominence reached a peak in the late 40s when they won the nationally coveted "All-College Jazz Orchestra of the Year" award, sponsored by Ebony Magazine.

The early 50s saw them as the studio band for the campus' WHOV radio station. The group dissolved in the mid-50s, due to a shift in students' entertainment interests.

As Hampton approached its Centennial Year Celebration in 1968, President Jerome Holland sought to integrate both the cultural and educational phases of college life into a weekend celebration.

This vision established the now-renowned Hampton Jazz Festival. As such, a jazz workshop was inaugurated at the beginning of the festival. Local as well as nationally celebrated jazz musicians conducted demonstration classes for many of the summer school enrollees.

Now 26 years later, the Hampton Jazz Festival is still revered as the only such festival sponsored by an educational institution, a municipality (city of Hampton) and an independent entertainment enterprise (Festival Productions).

In the early 70s the school's music department, led by jazz pianist and faculty member Consuela Moore-

head, tried unsuccessfully to initiate a faculty endorsed jazz studies program.

However, it was not until a decade later that the school's first degree granting jazz studies program was established. Today, a number of students are enrolled in its courses.

"Hampton University is no stranger to jazz," explained Rufus Easter, HU auxiliary services director, former Royal Hamptonian keyboardist and original Jazz Festival stage manager. "We have simply come full circle to make jazz and jazz studies an integral and additional medium for our students."

"The Basie Orchestra wants to help students to understand 'how to feel' and interpret the rhythm, as opposed to just playing the notes - missing in many jazz studies programs across the country. This institute will help to put the 'feel' and 'soul' in the jazz," Easter said, in reference to the focus of the Hampton University/Count Basie Orchestra Jazz Institute.

Additionally, the president of the Count Basie Orchestra, Aaron Woodward III, "wants to preserve the big band sound and history, which he feels is slipping away," remarked HU faculty member Sam Roberson, whose "One O'Clock Jump" musical salute to Basie in 1984 attracted the Grammy winning band's attention to HU.

Sections of this article were taken from the Hampton University/Count Basie Band Institute program handbook--author.

This is A 10% Discount Card



Caston Custom

Shoe Repair
"Quality Guaranteed"

Specializing in your shoe needs.
Can fix anything but a broken heart and a crack of day...

Mon.-Sat. 8 am-6 pm
706 S. Alston Ave.
Durham, NC 27703

(919) 688-1710

TOP FLIGHT BEAUTY AND BARBER SUPPLY

2506 Fayetteville St. Store Hours:
Durham, N.C. 27707 Mon.-Fri. 8:30-7:00
(919) 956-9052 Sat. 8:30-5:00

Presents A
Grand Opening Special!!!

**20% OFF
EVERYTHING**

2 weeks only April 1st thru April 15th

We carry ALL Brands:
Hawaiian Silky--Permydy--Basta--Clairol BB--Tressemmé--Wella--New Era Luster--Lustra Silk--Rigen--Lekaty--TCB Optimum--Precis--Isoplus--Roux--Revlon--Creme of Nature--Gentle--African Pride--Blow Dryers--Hot Combs--Curling Irons--Clippers--Nail Products--Cosmetics--

Jewelry DSundries--Barber Supplies--Much Much More!

Serving YOUR Community

Attention Graduates with work experience!

Walter Kaitz Foundation is actively recruiting successful ethnic minority professionals for management opportunities in the cable television industry.

Walter Kaitz Foundation Cable Management Program

Following an assessment process carefully designed to identify new talent for the cable industry, selected candidates are hired for available positions which utilize their professional skills and experience.

Placement Opportunities (Sampling)

- General Managers
- Financial Analysts
- Affiliate Salespersons
- Management Trainees
- Marketing Directors
- Account Executives

Eligibility Requirements

- Ethnic Minority (as defined by the FCC)
- Bachelor's Degree
- Two (2) years managerial or professional work experience
- Willingness to relocate nationwide

To Apply:

Send a cover letter and current résumé with salary history to:
Walter Kaitz Foundation, Preservation Park, 660 13th Street,
Suite 200, Oakland, CA 94612. Phone (510) 451-9000,
FAX (510) 451-3315. There are no application fees.



WALTER KAITZ FOUNDATION
Cable's Resource for Diversity®