

Jazz in June blooms into summer arts tradition

Melanie Mensch

Staff writer

If you play jazz, they will come.

Or so the Nebraska Art Association hoped when Jazz in June began nine years ago.

The NAA created the free weekly jazz concerts to entice a younger audience to venture inside the Sheldon Memorial Art Museum and see its variety of artwork.

"We had no way of knowing whether people would come when we first started," said Nancy Piper, executive director of the NAA. "We weren't sure if any people would come."

Not only did Jazz in June attract 200 people the first year, it has since drawn thousands with its successful combination of music and art.

Each Tuesday this June, crowds of people will make their pilgrimage to the Sculpture Garden, the area west of the Sheldon. Beneath shady trees and amid iron structures, concert-goers armed with picnic baskets, blankets and lawn chairs claim their spot on the grassy carpet to listen to the cool sounds of jazz in the summer breeze.

Kicking off this year's concert series on Tuesday, June 6 is the UNL Jazz Quintet. New to Jazz in June, this group features four professors of UNL's music department. Members are Tom Larson, piano; Darryl White, trumpet; Peter Bouffard, guitar; Rusty White, bass; and "Fig" Siguard Lyles, drum. The UNL Quintet will play original compositions and familiar mainstream jazz.

Darryl White, a UNL professor who has played his trumpet

with the quintet for three years, said the public's appreciation for jazz has grown.

"Jazz in particular is one of the only true American art forms," he said. "Jazz in June is a great combination of two great forms of art. People who are not necessarily artists begin to appreciate other forms of art."

Other jazz acts include the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra, which will play a variety of traditional big band favorites on June 13. The Matt Wallace Group on June 20 will dabble in every jazz style from mainstream to pop, funk and fusion. The Angela Hagenbach Sextet, influenced by the zesty Latin rhythms of Musa Nova, will treat crowds to the sounds of salsa jazz on June 27.

Daniel Siedell, curator for the Sheldon, said Jazz in June offered a different venue to see and hear local jazz acts perform.

"It brings people to the Sculpture Garden," he said. "They're sitting around art, only a few feet away; the gallery as a backdrop. It helps people become more familiar and comfortable being around museums."

And with a crowd of music

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Nancy Piper

executive director, Nebraska Arts Association

enthusiasts within eye-shot of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, more folks may stroll into the gallery for a look at exhibitions.

In the Gallery through June is The Perpetual Well: Contemporary Art from the Jewish Museum in New York. This exhibit features a kaleidoscopic collection of paintings, sculpture, prints and photography by both Jewish and non-Jewish artists, such as Richard Avedon and Annie Leibovitz.

Also featured in the Gallery during Jazz in June are the engravings and etchings of Leonard Baskin, and another exhibit on performance art.

Piper said the success of Jazz in June had exceeded the NAA's hopes of attracting a younger audience.

"As it turns out," she said, "we developed a new audience, not just a younger one. It's any age, from tiny babies with their mothers to students studying to older people sitting in wheelchairs. We had no idea it would grow so big."

Although soft drinks, iced tea and cookies will be sold during the concerts, people are encouraged to bring their own food, blankets and chairs. Volunteers from the NAA will be selling Jazz in June posters, T-shirts and CDs and tapes of the night's featured band.

Concerts will be Tuesdays at 7 p.m. The Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery will open its doors at 6:30 p.m. prior to the concerts and will be open during the concerts. In case of rain, the concerts will be held in the Sheldon Auditorium.

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Series presents jazz in casual atmosphere

Shelley Mika

Staff writer

Often times going to a jazz concert involves getting tickets, pulling out dress clothes and arriving on time to get to your cramped seats. Occasionally sacrifices like these have to be made in order to catch a bit of musical culture.

However, for those who crave a little jazz without the hassle of formalities, Jazz in June provides the best of both worlds.

After several years of the annual music event, held in the Sheldon Art Gallery Sculpture Garden, most people are proba-

bly familiar with the laid back atmosphere abounding every Tuesday in June.

Many people bring lawn chairs, others make themselves comfortable in the grass. Still others prefer to mill about, occasionally stopping to say hello to an acquaintance while others in front cling to every note emitted from the concrete stage above.

Regardless of how people choose to enjoy the festivities, every Tuesday in June around 7:00 jazz musicians are guaranteed to share their love of the genre in the warm summer air.

In years past the Jazz in June committee has included musicians from several different geo-

graphical areas. However, this year, aside from one artist, the committee chose to include mainly local musicians.

The following is a list of musicians scheduled to perform for this year's Jazz in June:

June 6 UNL Jazz Quintet. The members of the UNL Jazz Quintet (a number of which are UNL music instructors) include Tom Larson on keyboard, Peter Bouffard on guitar, Darryl White on trumpet, Rusty White on Bass, and Siguard Lyles on drums. The band will perform original compositions as well as music from Darryl White's CD "Ancient Memories."

June 13 Nebraska Jazz Orchestra. Led by Ed Love, the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra contains about 16 members and plays mostly big band tunes.

June 20 Matt Wallace Group. From Omaha, Wallace plays a number of different saxophones. The group will play a wide variety of styles and contains approximately six people.

June 27 Angela Hagenbach Sextet. Hagenbach, a singer from Kansas City, has a group called Musa Nova which does mostly Latin styles. A desire to do more in Lincoln this year inspired her to expand her group to perform at Jazz in June.

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