The heat behind the cool

From left, Battle Ground High School jazz band members Sam Henrikson, Robert Knue and Max White soak up the music backstage as the Mountain View High School band performs Saturday at the Clark College Jazz Festival. About 1,200 high school musicians played in the two-day event.

By HOWARD BUCK
Columbian staff writer

A smooth wave of cool blew through Vancouver on Saturday.

We're not talking weather. We're talking Ellington, Basie, downbeats, upbeats and enough black and white tuxedos to send Penguin Nation into a frenzy.

Gotta be the annual Clark College Jazz Festival!

This year's 47th edition was, as always, a three-day feast for fans in newly remodeled Gaiser Hall. And, a testing ground for 45 high school jazz bands from Washington and Oregon, both large and small, who played Friday and Saturday following vocal ensemble competition on Thursday.

Keep positive. Look like you're having fun out there," music teacher Sam Ormsen told the Mountain View Jazz I group, the cream of the East Vancouver high school's three stage bands.

A few muted chuckles and warm-up notes leaked from the group as it waited to take the stage. A Seattle-area school was closing out its three-set song.

"They put in so many hours and work so hard," Ormsen said during the pause. "Now's the time they become performers. Put it out there, and communicate that fun they're having to the audience," was his advice to them, he said.

Signs taped to the wall warned groups, "Be ready! Your 20 minutes begin when the first member goes on stage."

Indeed, only seconds elapsed from the time Mountain View strode in, before they cracked up Ellington's "It's a Meow Tune," bathed in bright lights and the warm embrace of a full house.

The group came up big, waiting next in the wings, members of Battle Ground High School's top-notch unit grooved and pumped to the set, which ended with Gordon Goodwin's "Count Baba's Boogie."

The saxophone line, then the trombones, finally the trumpets, belted out staccato verses in a precise surge. Crisp, and clear. "Great! I think it went great," said lead trumpet player Cameron Wilson, 18, a Mountain View senior. He and the others shared satisfied smiles.

Wilson has played Gaiser Hall before, but not like this. Last year, he played second part. This time, he was lead trumpet, with solos to nail. "I was just screaming, as loud as I could," he said, laughing. "Oh, God, yeah, there's a lot more pressure. I realize everybody can hear me well. It's so hot up there" under the lights, he added.

Outside the performing ball, other musicians checked out new instruments, sheet music for sale, sign-up sheets for jazz camps.

In Clark's fireplace lounge, four sax players from Clackamas High School jammed on a sax quartet piece laid out on a table: Sight reading, and doing it well. "This is what we do," said alto sax player Roman Kravets, who turns 18 today. "We've just been hanging out until the finals (competition) are announced. The trip from Oregon to Clark is familiar, being one of the first big local contests each year, he said.

Kravets is impressed by the talent, glad to hear different schools and arrangements. "It's a real measuring stick and he's proud of his Clackamas programs. I'm a senior. In four years, we've... improved a lot. It's really looking up," he said.

Rich Inouye, in his second year as Clark jazz director and running the event, said that's the festival's legacy. "The best thing that all those students get to hearing their peers," Inouye said.

Jazz pumps life into Clark College crowd

"Becoming aware of all the outstanding bands, hear the awesome stuff they can do if they put their minds and energy to it!"

Rich Inouye

Jazz director

"It's a Meow Tune"
Area schools, musicians get jazz fest nods

The Columbian

Several Clark County bands and musicians took awards at the 47th Annual Clark College Jazz Festival over the weekend.

Here are winners, according to the college's music department.

**Thursday's vocal jazz winners:**
- King's Way Christian School: First place in the A Division.
- Prairie High School: First place in the AA Division.
- Battle Ground High School: First place in the AAA Division.

**Outstanding musician awards:**
- Remi Skalsky of Battle Ground High School and Ryan Dawson of Hudson's Bay High School.

**Friday's jazz ensemble winners:**
- Woodland High School: Second place in the A Division.
- Hockinson High School: Third place in the AA Division.

**Saturday's jazz ensemble winners:**
- Union High School: third place in the AAA Division.
- Mountain View High School: third place in theAAAA Division.

**Outstanding musician awards:**
- Cameron Wilson, lead trumpet, Mountain View High School.
- Spencer Stewart, bass player, Mountain View High School.

The 2009 Sweepstakes trophy was awarded to Roosevelt High School of Seattle.

Jazz:

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ouye said. “Becoming aware of all the outstanding bands, hear the awesome stuff they can do ... if they put their minds and energy to it.

“Just soak it up, that's the best thing,” he said.

Indeed, hours after she played for Inouye's Clark band, freshman Ashley Demoss, 18, a trumpet player, loitered with two friends in a mezzanine corner. They listened as Battle Ground played. Inside the hall, young fans ringed the back wall or sat on the floor, with every folding seat taken.

“It's so much fun. Jazz just has a free-spirit feel to it,” De Moss said. She said the festival helped lure her to Clark, where she's torn between a music or nursing career. It still gives her chills: “You see soloists who inspire you,” she said.

A 2008 Mountain View graduate, De Moss was thrilled to see her old band thrive under Al Aldridge, a local legend in jazz teaching who's just joined that program. She visited friends there, when they had just picked their new songs.

“They've come such a far way,” she said. “They played so well.”

Clark women toe the line for victory over Tacoma

The Columbian

The Clark College women's basketball team did not leave Saturday's game at the free-throw line.

The Penguins made 13 of 19 free throws to pull away from Tacoma 56-49 in the NWAACC West Division game in Tacoma.

“We have left games at the free-throw line, and today we shot 68 percent,” Clark coach Nancy Boone said. “We are making gains there.”

Rebounding also helped Clark (4-13, 4-6) as they held the advantage 33-26. Michelle Martin had nine of the Penguins' rebounds.

“The past two games, we have rebounded better,” Boone said. “Today, most of ours came at key times.”

Mandy Wall led Clark's balanced scoring with 18 points and seven rebounds.

“We feel like we are turning the corner, but we still have gains to make,” Boone said.

**At Tacoma**

The NWAACC's third-ranked team had four players in double figures and outrebounded Clark 54-28 on the way to its 19th victory of the season.

Garrick Ashenfelter and Brandon Jones each scored 12 points for Clark (11-8, 5-4).

Tacoma's Kevin Dancer led all scorers with 26 points and 16 rebounds, and Anthony Gittens had 15 points and 10 rebounds.