

# Catch the beat, feel the jazz

Kids with an ear for swing delight in the music



Heritage High School trombone player James Powers, 16, competed with his school's jazz band Saturday at the Clark College Jazz Festival. Powers has played the trombone since the fourth grade.

By **MARISSA HARSHMAN**  
Columbian staff writer

**S**eventeen-year-old Breegan Lorange has played the saxophone since sixth grade. She would have started a year earlier, but her hands were too small to fit around the instrument.

Sixteen-year-old James Powers' parents had him listening to jazz music while he was still in his mother's womb. Since the fourth grade, he's followed in his trombone-playing father's footsteps.

Sixteen-year-old Brianna Richardson has been a fan of jazz music for as long as she can remember. She picked up the trombone for the first time as a fifth-grader.

The three high-schoolers were among hundreds of teens putting their love of jazz music and their talent for feeling the rhythm on display at the 49th annual Clark College Jazz Festival in Vancouver this weekend.

More than 60 middle- and high-school jazz bands and vocal jazz ensembles from across Washington and Oregon participated in the three-day event at Gaiser Hall. Saturday was the final day of the competition. Event results will be published Monday in *The Columbian*.

Hundreds of people filed in and out of the auditorium throughout the event to listen to the young musicians. As the sounds of horns, saxophones and pianos filled the room, people in the audience tapped their feet and moved their heads to the beat.

Those playing and attending enjoyed the smooth sounds, but several teens at the event agreed that the genre isn't fully appreciated by most, especially other teens.

"I personally feel like jazz music in the younger generation doesn't exist," said 16-year-old Charley Ault. "Nobody really gives jazz a chance. If it's not by Snoop Dogg, it's not worth listening to."

The Columbian chatted with a handful of local teens at the festival about jazz — everything from their favorite musicians to their feelings about "jazz hands" (when dancers have outstretched arms with palms outward and fingers splayed; shaking is optional).

Here's what they had to say.

## Breegan Lorange

*A senior at Evergreen High School, plays the alto saxophone.*



Evergreen High School bass player Jacob Ferguson, 16, plays on stage Saturday at the Clark College Jazz Festival, as seen from the wings, between backstage curtains.

Photos by ZACHARY KAUFMAN/*The Columbian*

**Is playing jazz music inherent or learned?**

Both, but "a desire to be awesome definitely helps. Without that, you're just going to be mediocre."

**Why play in the jazz band as opposed to other bands?**

"I think jazz band is a place where, in music, you have a whole lot of leeway." In other bands, like concert and marching, "you don't have as much freedom."

## Keith Cheek

*A sophomore at Heritage High School, plays the alto saxophone and flute.*

**What do people your age think about jazz music?**

"I kind of was teased for playing music."



Heritage High School sophomore Keith Cheek, who plays alto saxophone and flute, watches from backstage as his bandmates perform.



ZACHARY KAUFMAN/The Columbian

Evergreen High School alto saxophone player Charley Ault, center, lines up with his bandmates Saturday for a quick rehearsal before taking the stage at the Clark College Jazz Festival. The band was among more than 60 jazz groups competing at the three-day event.

## Jazz:

From Page C1

Most people really never listened to it, so they don't like it.

**What's playing on your iPod?**

"I don't have an iPod." But the last song he listened to was "Let's Get It On," by Marvin Gaye.

## Charley Ault

*A junior at Evergreen High School, plays the alto saxophone.*

**How do you feel about jazz hands?**

"It's an essential part of jazz. All jazz musicians know jazz hands are a big part of the arsenal."

**Who's your favorite jazz musician or band?**

"Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band. Glenn Miller."

## Brianna Richardson

*A sophomore at Mountain View High School, plays trombone.*

**What do people your age think about jazz music?**

"A lot of people think it's old-people music."

**What's playing on your iPod?**

"The Beatles."

## James Powers

*A sophomore at Heritage High School, plays trombone.*

**Who's your favorite jazz musician or band?**

"There's so many. It's an art form that's lasted for years. There's Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, Eric Dolphy."

**Is playing jazz music inherent or learned?**

Both, but "It makes it a lot easier if you're exposed to it when you're younger. It's like you naturally pick up the rhythm of the music and it translates in your playing."

## Christian O'Neil

*A senior at Mountain View High School, plays trombone.*

**Why play in the jazz band as opposed to other bands?**

"It's most fun to play of all the styles the high school offers."

**How do you feel about jazz hands?**

"I'm not a fan."