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University of Montana

Office of University Relations • Missoula, Montana 59812 • (406) 243-2522

MEDIA RELEASE

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SIDEBAR: (see release titled "From Alleys to Academics...")

Recently, four members of the UM Jazz Workshop expressed their views on jazz and their group. They are Russ White, Missoula; Rick Dahl, Billings; Matt Lyon, Cascade; and Jim Gipe, Great Falls. Some of their comments follow:

Q: There's been some talk of changing the name of your group. Do you think "Jazz Workshop" is an appropriate name?

A: --Well, there might be some misconceptions among students who want to sign up for it, thinking it to be a general, instructive course on jazz. There are theory and improvisation classes you can take, but we're a performing group. Our meetings are all rehearsals for performances.

--But I like the word "workshop." I think it adequately reflects what we do. We're expected to already have a grasp on the basic theoretical functions of jazz, but it's still an educational kind of experience.

--At North Texas State they call them "Jazz Labs."

Q: What's the role of a teacher in that kind of situation?"

A: --The way I learn from Lance is..I don't know I'm learning something until I realize I know it. He puts things in front of you and then it's up to you. He says things over and over and then, one day, it just clicks.

--He's an ideal catalyst. He gets people thinking.

--Then it's up to you to put it into practice. When improvising it should go straight from your head to your horn. It becomes a feeling connection.

--One thing he really makes me aware of is how everyone fits in with everyone else, musically and personally. He is a real father figure-- he makes the band into a family.

(more)

Sidebar-- add one

--That sounds like a stereotype, but it's true. And if he gets angry at you, you really feel it. He is one person I would really do the job for.

--He encourages you to experiment, go in any direction you want. He pushes us because he thinks we can do anything. At least this year he does.

Q: Did you all come here for the jazz program?

A: --I did, definitely.

--I want to major in guitar, but I can't here. I was thinking about voice, but, I don't know.... It's not possible yet to major in jazz.

--The program's growing, though. This is the first year there are three jazz bands. But it's all on Lance.

--A lot of people want to learn vocal jazz technique, but there's really no one to teach it.

Q: Is vocal jazz technique really teachable-- apart from just hearing it?

A: --No music is.

Q: What do you want to be doing in a few years?

A: --Going to a large metropolitan area to become a professional in music-- not necessarily just in jazz.

--I don't really see myself as a "jazz musician."

--That's the great thing about jazz. It's open to anything. All kinds of music-- anything you hear is going to influence you. Nature influences me a lot. In jazz, anything is usable.

--And a lot of current forms are based on jazz.

--I'd like to go to graduate school-- for the exposure. And I'd like to somehow be in a position to bring music to people.

--I just want to be part of something that hasn't happened before.

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