

# Best Jazz Camp ever— *until next year!*

by **Bill Dendle** TRAD. JAZZ CAMP DIRECTOR

It's happened again: we had the best jazz camps ever—as we do every year. This year, we had 99 youth campers, comprising eleven bands, and yet everything ran smoothly. Everyone had a great time, and the musical and personal growth was unprecedented.

I mentioned last year that *camp is about more than just music*, and it's still true. We saw young people working together to create more than just music; they learn valuable lessons from the process of becoming a band, and from the interactions that are required of players in a jazz band. They must listen to each other, respect each other, help and support each other, and consider how their individual ideas and actions affect the group. These are all necessary and desirable skills for success in life—at work, and in families. Jazz is about *creating harmony and teamwork*, and still having the personal freedom to *express yourself* within the framework you've collectively created.

We were extremely pleased to welcome **Dave Robinson**, founder and president of the **Trad Jazz Educators Network (TJEN)**, to the camp. Dave came all the way from the east coast (on his own nickel) to observe the camp, document what happens there, take photos and video, and ultimately to create an article for the *Mississippi Rag*. As I said at the concert, I can't imagine anyone more dedicated to introducing this music to young people, and getting them interested in playing it. He has created a curriculum kit for use in middle and high school music programs, and it is most impressive. It was a joy to get to know Dave, to have him join in the evening jam sessions, and to know that we can mutually support each other in our desire to see traditional jazz become part of more young musicians' lives. We hope Dave will return and participate more fully in next year's camp, and we thank him for sharing his considerable experience and insight with us. Dave will be back in February for the 2nd annual **Traditional Jazz Youth Band Festival**, which I hope everyone will attend. When you see him, shake his hand and thank him for the good work he is doing.



2006 STJS TRAD



JAZZ CAMP



This year's favorite camp quote, from one young singer to another, "When she sings about her papa or her daddy, she doesn't mean her father."

This year's Adult Trad Jazz Camp was also the best—with many new campers, and an increase in young adult musicians. We hope to attract an increasing number of college-age musicians, and to see more returning youth campers as the years pass.

Congratulations are due to Shelley Burns, Dannie Balsler and Jason Wanner for creating and implementing an improved curriculum for vocalists at the adult camp. Rather than sitting at band rehearsals waiting for their chance to sing, vocalists spent most of their time in concentrated, direct instruction and practice in all of the skills that jazz singers need. Space doesn't permit going into detail, but suffice it to say, the singers were thrilled, and the bands they sang with were, too.

It was a thrill for me to see and hear major breakthroughs occurring at both camps, and not a few of them came from drummers, who were so lucky to have Terry Waddell as their instructor (both in band and for drums). At nearly the last minute, Ed Metz, Jr. was suddenly stricken with a high-paying tour of Japan with Eddie Higgins, so on Terry Myers' recommendation, we engaged Terry Waddell to take Ed's place. What a fabulous drummer, band instructor, and friend we found in Terry, and we hope to work with him again soon.

There were no sightings of "Evil Bill" this year; perhaps we can just put that name to rest ☺. Bill Evans, Griff Alm, Perky Tallent, Tom Brewer, Molly Reeves and Robin and Phoebe Castro kept everything running smoothly, and the Road Crew were magnificent, as always, in getting everything to and from camp. My thanks to all of the faculty and staff for the best camps ever (until next year).

2006 Trad. Jazz Camp Staff:

- BILL DENDLE, Camp Director
RUSTY STIERS, trumpet
TERRY MYERS, ANITA THOMAS, reeds
GREG VARLOTTA, trombone
BOB PHILLIPS, JASON WANNER, piano
LEE "WESTY" WESTENHOFER, bass/tuba
STEVE HOMAN, guitar
EDDIE ERICKSON, banjo
TERRY WADDELL, drums
SHELLEY BURNS, DANNIE BALSER (tpt.), vocals
BILL EVANS, Facilities Coordinator