

THE CJC BIG BAND

History of the CJC Big Band

The Greater Des Moines Community Jazz Center (CJC) was founded in the 1980's with the help of many people, including Scott Davis, Dave Koberdahl, Larry Green, Cecil Stanley, and Phillis Leaverton. As a part of the CJC's outreach efforts, the CJC Big Band was formed in order to travel and perform at the IAJE festival in New Orleans in the late 1980's.

The CJC Big Band lost a consistent presence until 1993, when Mr. Doug Bown, at the suggestion of Larry Green, worked to start the CJC Big Band up again. Doug Bown was the part time assistant band director at Hoover High School and arranged for the band to rehearse at the school and make use of Hoover High School's music library to get started. Performing a variety of music, notably arrangements of Woody Herman and Count Basie music, the CJC Big Band began rehearsing and performed for a few high school events. Notable pianist Jason Danielson was a Hoover student and with the CJC Big Band during that year or two that Doug Bown led the band.

Phillis Leaverton, who at the time oversaw the student jam sessions at Java Joes, arranged to have the CJC Big Band play on the third Sundays at the downtown location of Java Joe's. At the time, there was no Fourth Street Theater so the band had to squeeze onto the little stage in the coffee shop. Doug Bown assembled and directed the band for a year or two and then handed it over to Chris Paulson who played drums and directed band at East High School at the time.

Since the mid 90's the group has been led by a number of musicians, including: Doug Bown, John Kendeigh, Frank Iacovazzil, Bob Start, etc.

The CJC Big Band has rehearsed at a number of locations, including Callanan Middle School, Walnut Creek United Methodist Church, and more!

The band has performed at many different events and functions throughout its history, including: Jazz in July, Swing dance events, Ballroom events, Jasper Winery Events, as a guest band with the Des Moines Big Band, and more!