



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Mia Vlaar, vjf@vailjazz.org, (970) 479-6146

Jazz Education Program Weaves Music with American History

Eagle County 4TH and 5TH Graders Attend Third Session of Jazz Goes to School

January 26, 2009 - Vail, Colorado - Jazz Goes to School, the Vail Jazz Foundation's free education program for 4th and 5th graders, returns to Eagle County this week, featuring a trio of professional musician/educators who travel to 14 elementary schools to present an interactive lesson on jazz and American History.

This third session of the four part program examines the distinguishing characteristic of jazz music: Improvisation. This ability to 'create as you go' is essential for any musician wishing to play jazz. "Jazz in the beginning was very simple," said Tony Gulizia, who leads the educational program for the Vail Jazz Foundation. "In this lesson, we travel through history from ragtime to modern jazz, and examine how the music has become much more complex. Jazz is unique because jazz musicians can carve their own path through the music, expressing their own musical voice using improvisation", continued Gulizia.

12 Bar Blues

The Jazz Goes to School musicians, which include Tony Gulizia on piano, Joey Gulizia on drums, and Andy Hall on bass, introduce the blues scale to students in this session. "The 12 bar blues form is one of the most widely used progressions not just in jazz, but in all music," said Gulizia. The trio demonstrates styles of Rock, Folk, Country, and Jazz, all of which use 12 bar blues. As a follow up, fifth grade students are assigned to work in small groups to compose a 12 bar composition using the blues scale, lyrics and a rhyme scheme. A medley of these blues compositions will then be performed by the Jazz Goes to School Quintet at the fourth and final session at the Vilar Performing Arts Center on April 13.

Filling a Need

"Jazz Goes to School fills a critical need in our elementary schools", said Tracy Tutag, a member of the United Way of Eagle River Valley, which helps fund the program. "We understand the need for arts education in our schools, and in its 11th year, Jazz Goes to School has a proven formula that works for Eagle County students."

The Vail Jazz Foundation's executive director, Mia Vlaar, cited some of the benefits of the program, "Jazz Goes to School provides a comprehensive curriculum, including pre and post lesson plans, follow up activities, and of course the sessions in the classroom with our JGTS musician. Most kids would never be exposed to jazz, much less understand its development and relevance to American history without this program", Vlaar continued.

About Jazz Goes To School

Jazz Goes to School is in its eleventh year of providing free jazz education in Eagle County Schools. The program is just one example of how the Vail Jazz Foundation pursues its mission to perpetuate the jazz art form, with a focus on young musicians and young audiences. Jazz Goes to School reaches over 1,000 students each year, and has exposed over 10,000 school students to jazz over the past 10 years. Jazz Goes to School offers a unique interactive learning experience that enhances the basic school curriculum and is provided free of charge, thanks to each school's PTO and program sponsors, including Alpine Bank, Vilar Center Community Performance Fund, City Market/The Kroger Foundation, Colorado Mountain Express (Official Transportation Provider), Eagle County RE-50J School District and PTOs, Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, United Way of Eagle River Valley, Vail Valley Foundation, Vilar Performing Arts Center, Walmart Foundation, and other corporate sponsors.

For more information please contact:

Mia Vlaar, Executive Director

970-479-6146

vjf@vailjazz.org

www.vailjazz.org