

Honoka'a high School Jazz Band

A wonderful performance at the Capitol



(Above) The band joins Mark for a photo in front of the Capitol at the Father Damien Statue



Honokaa Jazz Band's "Big City Tour," April 19-22, includes shows at the State Capitol and Royal Hawaiian Center, in honor of National Jazz Appreciation Month.

One of the young group's first free performances will be at the Hawaii State Capitol Rotunda. After opening

remarks from Rep. Mark Nakashima and Sen. Malama Solomon, the band will go on at 10 a.m. On Saturday, April 21, the 30-member band will perform at the Bishop Museum as part of the YMCA Healthy Kids Day. Later that day, they will open the Twilight Jazz at Helumoa Concert in The Royal Grove at the Royal Hawaiian Center at 7 p.m. Joining the line-up will be The Kit Ebersbach Combo and Starr Kalahiki, performing at 8 p.m.



The Honokaa Jazz Band was organized in 1988 by school musical director Gary Washburn. Since then, after almost 25 years of annual repertoire changes to accommodate the “personality” of the band as students graduate, the youth jazz band still remains the pride and joy of Honokaa High.

In 2010, the music program at Honokaa High School was selected by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation (NAMM) as one of 138 schools in the United States with an outstanding music program and commitment to music education.

They are also the recipients of the prestigious 2011 Grammy Signature Schools Enterprise Award. Gary Washburn, the band director, recently received the 2011 Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction Award from the National Society of High School Scholars.

In 2012, the band performed for the Edison Learning Convention in the Ilikai Hotel in Honolulu and will be featured in the June edition of the “Hana Hou” Magazine.

This year the band shows off a repertoire from a variety of music spanning from the 1940s to present including the music of Paul Simon, Michael Buble, Etta James, Ruth Brown, Brazil 66, Christina Aguilera, Maceo Parker, Aretha Franklin, as well as a special Cuban song “Mis Dos Pequeñas.”

“With all of the emphasis on math and science, it is crucial to always remember that it is music and the arts that provide us with inspiration,” Nakashima said.

“Music, drama and the arts provide our students with the opportunity to exercise their creativity, act on their inspiration, and imagine the possibilities,” he added. “Teachers like Mr. Washburn provide students with the venue to explore this realm and to contribute profoundly to our quality of life.”

“I strongly encourage everyone to take time out of their busy schedules and listen to the music produced by these very talented youths,” Solomon said. “Under the direction of their band director Gary Washburn, these students have demonstrated how music education has benefited them to be successful in school and in life.”