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Teaching Pétanque



Photo Gilbert Sonet

Athenian School French teacher Mary Eid organized a trip from Danville to Lafayette with her middle school students last month to visit the Pétanque grounds on St. Mary's Road, just south of the Community Center. A welcoming committee from the Lamorinda Pétanque Club demonstrated the old French game played with metal 'boules' aimed at a small wooden 'co-

chonnet' that get thrown in a different spot at each round. "The idea is to get kids to participate in this game that can be played by people of all ages that bring generations closer," said Pétanque Club member Gilbert Sonet. "We hope that other local French classes would be interested to come and have fun here." Lamorinda Pétanque Club is opened to everyone; regulars meet at the Lafayette pétanque terrain on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons starting at 2 p.m. and are happy to show the game to beginners. Some of the local players also participate in national and international competitions. On April 21 the Lafayette Club hosted the Federation of Petanque USA Northwestern regional mixed double tournament.

S. Braccini

Bentley School's Jazz Festival Features Jazz Stars of Today and Tomorrow

Submitted by Jenna Starkey



Students from Bentley Upper School and Stanley Middle School perform together

Photos provided

Friends, family, and guests came together April 20 for Bentley School's 1st Annual Jazz Festival to celebrate several generations of jazz. Youth from Bentley Upper School were joined by Lafayette's Stanley Middle School to work and play with musicians who have been performing at the highest level for decades to create an evening to remember. The veterans inspired the youngsters, and the youngsters gave the veterans a glimpse of the future and the assurance that the great jazz traditions will carry on.

The award winning Stanley School Jazz Messengers, led by director Bob Athayde, opened the show with a vibrant collection of songs, including "Strike up the Band." Bentley School's Jazz I Ensemble seamlessly joined the Messengers for two songs including, "Spring Ain't Here," and "Cuchi Frito Man." It was a special treat to see how polished these musicians are at such a young age.

Next up was the Bentley School Jazz Master Class, under the direction of Brian Pardo. The Master Class is Bentley's performance-based jazz ensemble made up of Bentley's most experienced jazz students. The ensemble performed with confidence and style, and impressed the audience with a playful take on the classic Steely Dan tune, "Josie." The Master Class also welcomed members of the Bentley

Jazz II Ensemble to perform together on "Song for Bilbao."

The show followed with a performance by duo Brian Pardo and Lynn Ray, who showcased songs from their upcoming album. Brian Pardo is the Director of Bentley Ensembles and is on the faculty at various East Bay schools including The Jazz School in Berkeley, Mills College and UC Berkeley. He has performed and recorded for commercial radio, television, and film and collaborated with well-known musicians including Eddie Harris, Bonnie Raitt and Jack McDuff. Lynn Ray is known in the R&B and Gospel communities and was nominated for an Outstanding Female Vocalist Bammy Award by BAM magazine. During the show, Pardo and Ray were backed by members of Ray Obiedo and Mambo Caribe, David K. Mathews on keyboards, Marc van Wageningen on bass, and Phil Thompson on drums. Ray's soulful voice and Pardo's strong musicality were a true pleasure. Especially moving was Pardo's unique arrangement of Johnny Nash's song, "I Can See Clearly Now," which offered a bittersweet note to the evening.

The night ended with Ray Obiedo and Mambo Caribe taking the stage. Obiedo is a well-known smooth jazz artist and producer in the Bay Area, and has recorded numerous albums with artists such as

Herbie Hancock, Pete Escovedo, Grover Washington Jr., Sheila E., and Brenda Russell, to name a few. He has four of his own albums on the Billboard Top 25 charts, and has produced a great deal of music for film and television.

Mambo Caribe is made up of some of the finest jazz musicians from the San Francisco Bay Area, including those noted above and Alex Murzyn on flute and soprano sax, Phil Hawkins on steel pans and percussion, and Sandy Cressman, vocals and percussion.

From the first note to the last, Mambo Caribe had the audience moving in their seats to the exciting rhythms of Brazilian, Afro-Caribbean and West Coast Latin jazz masterpieces. In addition to outstanding and crowd pleasing improvisational solos by Mathews, van Wageningen, Thompson, and Murzyn, Hawkins took a moment to explain the history of steel pans, Trinidad's beloved national instrument. He played a long solo, which showed off the pans' beautiful range of sound. In the final number David K. Matthews, currently touring with Santana, captivated the crowd with a special 10-minute piano solo.

The show ended late into the evening, with a standing ovation from the audience and a buzz of anticipation for what hopefully will become a new annual jazz tradition for Lamorinda.

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