

JAZZ FEST

Trumpeter comes to Loeb for 'celebration'

By Kristen Johnson

Features Editor

Not many jazz performers can admit to having played with legends like Count Basie and Duke Ellington.

Jon Faddis, however, played with them at age 17, and this Friday he will be performing in Loeb Playhouse as part of Jazz Fest.

"Lionel Hampton asked me to come play with his band and when I got to New York I had the pleasure of playing with many musical greats," Faddis said. "I mean, these were musicians of whose records I had always listened to."

Faddis grew up in California listening to a variety of jazz, classical and popular records. In his early teen years, Faddis idolized trumpet master Dizzy Gillespie. When he came to perform in town, Faddis, at age 15, was given the chance to sit in with Gillespie's combo.

"I remember that night, playing in the club in San Francisco – it was called the Jazz Workshop; I brought all of my Dizzy Gillespie records down to the club, which was around 50 records of Dizzy's, and he sat and autographed them," Faddis said. "When I was playing with him, I remember the room was just spinning."

Faddis considers this first performance with Gillespie to be the most important in his career because it was the turning point



Photo provided by the Chicago Jazz Ensemble

Jon Faddis poses with the Chicago Jazz Ensemble. They will perform Friday in Loeb Playhouse.

of his decision to turn his trumpet playing into a profession.

"That's when I knew I wanted to be a jazz musician," Faddis said. "As we got close, we became like father and son, and as we got closer we became like brothers."

Faddis' choice of the trumpet links back to Gillespie, but also relates to the beauty of the instrument itself.

"I think the trumpet speaks to my heart because it's so versatile," Faddis said.

Jonathan Christian, a senior in the College of Technology, shares Faddis' passion for the trumpet, which he has played since 6th grade. Christian is a member of the Purdue Jazz Band, which will perform during the week of Jazz Fest with its big

show on Friday evening in Loeb Playhouse.

"Faddis is definitely one of those legends who has played with the greats – he is one of the greats," Christian said. "He also has what they call great chops, meaning he has a good range, good longevity."

In addition to being an experienced jazz musician, Faddis also composes and conducts.

"Conducting is an amazing experience because you're standing in front of a band and you get to hear every little thing, which can be a good and a bad thing," Faddis said. "It's really exciting."

Faddis teaches at the Conservatory of Music at Purchase College, New York, and also is a guest lecturer at

Columbia College in Chicago.

At 8 p.m. Friday at Loeb Playhouse, Jon Faddis will perform with the Chicago Jazz Ensemble. Faddis is the artistic director of the band. He helps with programming events and conducting. According to Faddis, Friday night's show will be more of a birthday party hosted by himself and the ensemble.

"It's a 90th birthday celebration for Nat King Cole, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk; all four would have had their 90th birthdays last year," Faddis said. "We're going to give the audience a taste of all of those musicians, those great jazz giants."

Visit purdueexponent.org to hear samples of Faddis' music.