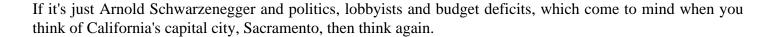
Travel and Adventure: Jazz it up in Sacramento

by David B. Goldman

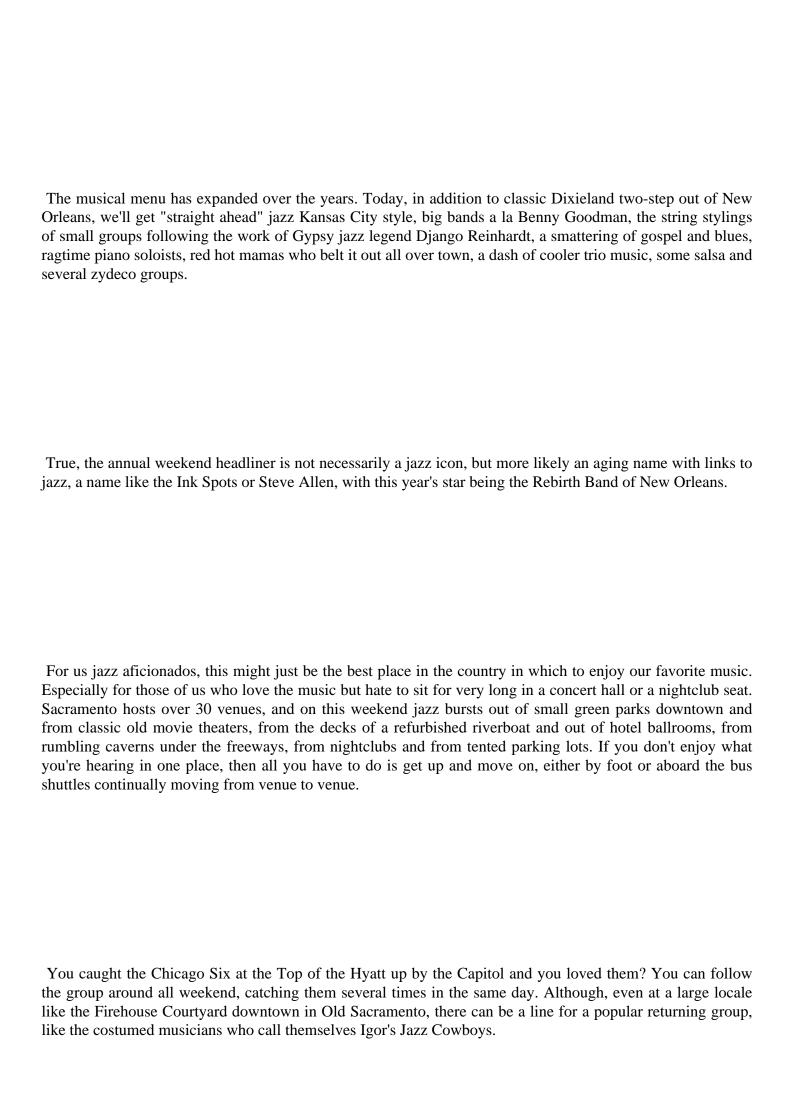


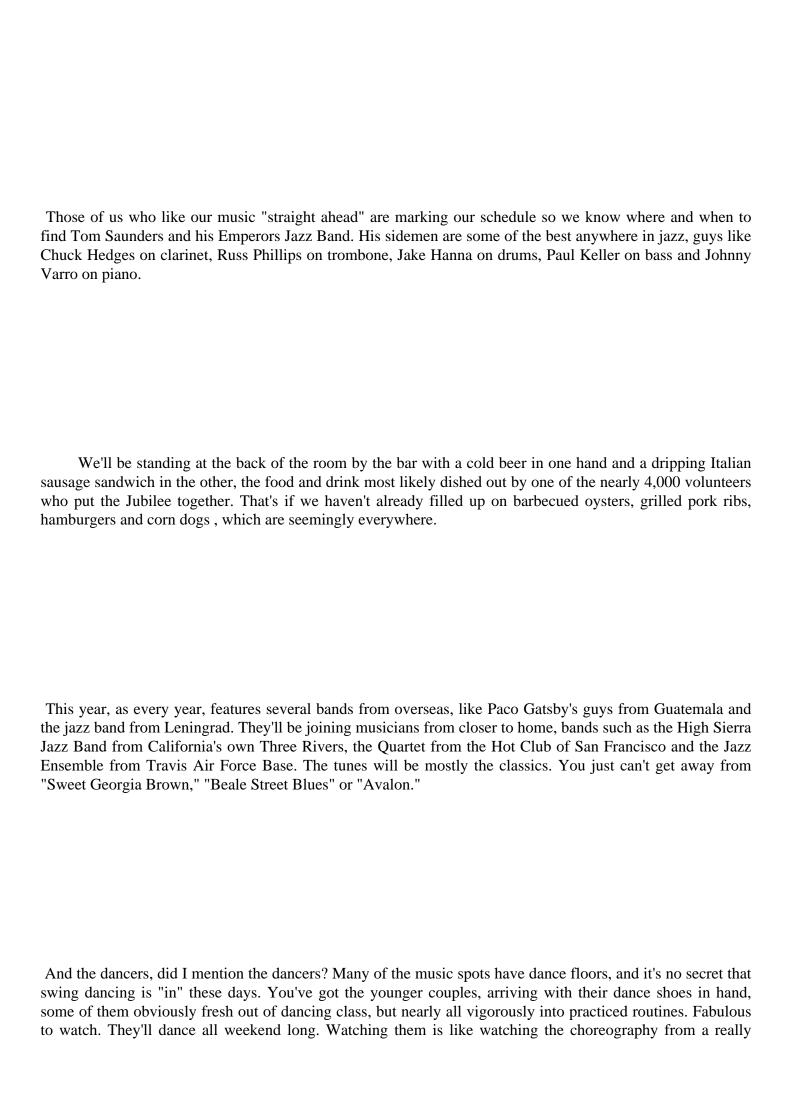
By the time I drove off the freeway and dropped into the downtown section of California's tree-lined capital for the first time on a Memorial Day weekend, nearly a decade ago, and heard the luscious wail of a hot clarinet coming off the street, I'd already learned my own Sacramento lesson. Which is that if you want a hotel room in the city on Memorial Day weekend, which this year is May 25-28, you'd best book it right away, since those days mark America's biggest, swingingest jazz gathering, the annual Sacramento Jazz Jubilee.

STRAIGHT AHEAD - If you love jazz, then you want to be part of the Sacramento Jazz Jubilee each May. Here a Dixieland jazz band plays for the crowd. CNS Photo courtesy of David B. Goldman. KAZOO YOU - Sacramento Jazz Jubilee fans chime in with their own tones during the four-day hot music festival. CNS Photo courtesy of David B. Goldman.

STRUMMIN' THE OLD BANJO - The banjo is one of the most popular instruments of the Sacramento Jazz Jubilee. CNS Photo by David B. Goldman. Beginning 34 years ago with a handful of bands playing mostly traditional Dixieland jazz pretty much as a party on the banks of the Sacramento River, the four-day event, usually basking in the warm, early summer breezes coming off the water, has grown to more than 100 bands and today draws over 100,000 visitors.

By Friday afternoon the politicians have fled the capital and we jazz enthusiasts have taken over. We flood the city from all over the country, arriving by car, by RV and by plane. We're wearing madras shorts, tank tops, hats and lots of suntan lotion. We've come for the music, for a good time and, perhaps even more, for this pure slice of Americana, to revel in America's indigenous music, perhaps the country's major contribution to world culture.





good 60-year-old musical.
But my own favorites are the oldsters, the white-haired couples who have clearly been together forever, still dancing beautifully, always perfectly in step with one another - even if they are only on the floor for the slower numbers. They're in for a treat this year, since on Saturday night several of the venues are going to feature Glen Miller-style rhythms.
In the background the shimmering, recently refinished Capitol dome shines in the center of blossom-filled Capitol Park. The park is where I go to get away from it all, to stretch out in the quiet warmth of early summer in California's capital. Although even here you can hear music from the Hyatt Regent Hotel across the street on a lazy, music-filled weekend in the Golden State's capital.
Weekend passes, all four days: \$100. Half or full day passes also available. For information: Tel: 916-372-5277, www.sacjazz.com.
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