

KSU jazz group's performance strong

By IFAN PAYNE
Music Critic

I cannot resist the cliché of saying that the Central States Jazz Festival held in McCain Auditorium this past weekend finished on an 'upbeat' with the superior performance of KSU's Concert Jazz Ensemble.

Although the CJE was not eligible, as representatives of the host institution, of entering the competitions, it nonetheless entertained the audience with a performance, at the close of Saturday's events, that represented the strongest playing by the band over the past two years. The ensemble grows from strength to strength with each outing, and Saturday's performance was tight and well disciplined with Paul Harrison capping the set off with a sensitive and well-delivered drum solo at the end of the final number, John Berry's *Free Flight*.

Despite the fact that the CJE was not an official entry, individual members of K-State's various jazz ensembles did well. Bass player Tim George, trumpeter Mike Gaches, who gave a particularly strong performance, pianist Julie Shute, all with the CJE, and John Scumacher and Steve Johnson, both with the Jazz Lab

1 band, received certificates of achievement.

To top it all off, vocalist and pianist Connaitre Miller won one of three National Association of Jazz Educator's scholarships.

Despite some less than sensitive and secure drumming and some problems making smooth rhythm and tempo changes, the University of Kansas Jazz 1 band walked off with the university band honors. Amongst the junior college bands, the Hutchinson band triumphed, and as expected the Central State Oklahoma, band was successful in the second band division.

Although highschool bands are not able to compete against one another, the Manhattan High School Stage Band figured prominently for their strong performance.

But of all the bands I heard, frankly, our own CJE, impressed me as well as any with John Berry's *Buenos Amigos* being a particularly strong addition to the repertoire.

That the Central States Jazz Festival was so enjoyable an experience was due to the organization and hard work of Al Cochran. That the CJE continues to improve, is also due to leadership.

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