

Jazz at the Lake...

...and a splendid weekend for it

Liz: Hurrah for the weather & jazz tap

By Liz Woodbury
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Last weekend brought both fine caliber jazz and great weather to Lake George Village. The 9th annual Lake George Jazz Festival, presented free over Saturday and Sunday afternoons at Shepard Park by the Lake George Arts Project, drew some 3,000 listeners, estimated Festival coordinator Paul Pines.

I caught two acts on Saturday's bill, The David Leonhardt Trio fused with their dance counter-

part, All Star Tap, and the vocal quintet, Group Five.

In his introduction to the audience, Pines said tap dance and jazz evolved together—it's easy to trace their interrelation if you look back to the days when tap dancers were at tally a part of a band, fronting big swing groups like Fletcher Henderson, and then Duke Ellington and Count Basie.

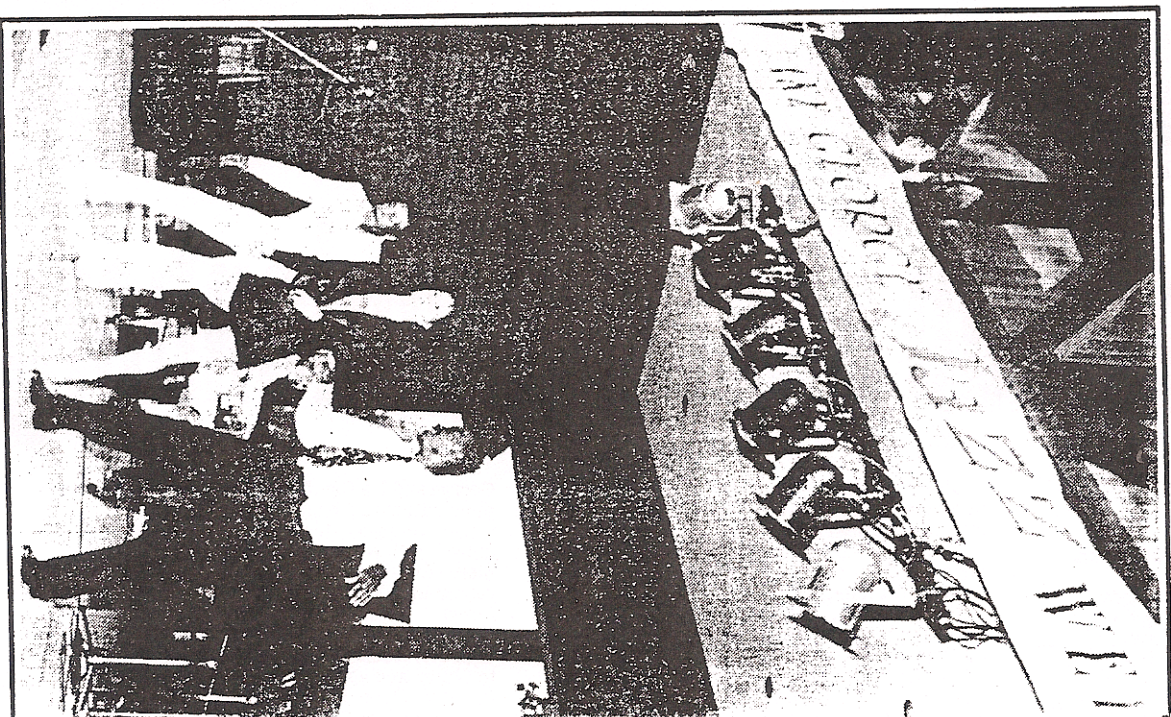
The improvisation of many tap performances runs parallel to the idea of jazz soloing—a perpetual newness based on spontaneity and the inspiration of a moment. And the more recent singing style of "vocalese" comes in to capture and

frame that instrumental solo in a lyric.

Watching this act, I felt an awe at the ingenuity of jazz rhythms. Both the musicians and dancers were breaking a single beat into heady and physically demanding subdivisions—and always coming out right on time. I'd never watched tap dancing so closely—by the end of the act I was sure these dancers could sub for the drummer at the drop of the hat, their sense of rhythm was so thorough.

Shelley Oliver, Herbin Van Cayseele and "elder statesman" James "Buster" Brown danced solo and in various combinations.

The most spectacular credits went to Van Cayseele, a native of Guyana, in a solo routine set to a Latin beat. He sailed and slid across the stage in a performance of athleticism and musicianship. Backstage, he offered that these talents were actually one and the same. "Tap is music," he said



All Star Tap drew raves.