

GIVEN that the mood established in last month's piece on the *Grande Parade du Jazz* was one of timelessness (Dizzy among the ruins blowing bebop to the moon), the follow-up is going to accentuate the timely.

When jazz is being simultaneously presented from three stages, one tends to move around between sets.

My ramblings through Cimiez Gardens were based on calculations like this: instead of sitting (or standing more likely) through a set change and being too early for Lionel Hampton's Big Band, I'll catch something of another group that's still playing, or just started, and thereby get an idea of what to attend tomorrow.

This was how I happened on *Toshiyuki Miyama and the New Herd* — you guessed it, a full-sized big band from Tokyo. Miyamasan was reading from a piece of paper he kept on the podium, "Next piece Donari". Interesting idea, arranging Japanese folk songs for jazz band, I thought, until I heard the first few beats of Charlie Parker's *Donna Lee* executed in tight unison at a blistering tempo.

These guys (they were all men) are definitely black belts when it comes to section work. When I checked them out the next night, Joe Newman was doing a guest spot with the band and you could see and feel the riveted concentration in the faces of the trumpet section as he soloed.

Next year they'll probably come back playing a perfected, swinging arrangement of Joe Newman's solo, and the year after ... watch out!

On yet another wandering, I ran into an old drummer friend of mine, Richie Morales, who was on tour with Spyro Gyra. I hadn't planned to catch their show but it would have been impolite not to at least drop in.

I have to admit that they were playing up a storm and sounded a lot *jazzier* than I had expected. This was largely due to the addition of Dave Samuels on vibes (a first class young jazz) and Richie, who can play anything, on drums.

In fact, the whole band was sounding good.

While I wouldn't go so far as to say they were

playing *jazz*, especially when one could walk the equivalent of half a block and hear great Bebop from the English *Jazz Journal All Stars* (Peter King on sax is astounding) or a little further, *The Hall of Fame All Stars*, led by the his-

torial Bud Freeman, (also on sax), it should be recorded that one of the world's more discerning audiences *didn't* walk ... and nor did I.

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LAST week Durban audiences saw the off-campus debut of the *NU Jazz*

Big bands ... at home and abroad

No



GROOVIN' ... The NU Jazz Ensemble gets things going in the park under the direction of Darius Brubeck

Ensemble (a full 17-piece big band) under my direction.

We played a Monday night gig at the Caister Hotel, a Wednesday lunch-hour concert at City Hall, and a concert in Mitchell Park on Sunday.

Since many people asked about our next appearance, here is the immediate itinerary:

- Monday, September 10 at Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre (*not* Howard College Theatre) at 1pm;

- October 6 we're part of an African Arts Festival in Umlazi.

The development of the *NU Jazz Ensemble*, since its first concert on April 16 this year, is evidenced by additional bookings and certainly our reception. I'm

pleased to report, has been mightily encouraging.

A stage band, as such groups are known in the States, should be as much a part of our university life as research, Rag and rugby — and let's hope the *NU Jazz Ensemble* will encourage universities and schools to move in this direction.

Besides the immediate and obvious benefits to

students and a hungry public, the long-term effect will be to raise the standard of music education generally.

If they can get it together in Tokyo, certainly Durban and the rest of South Africa have the potential, but it is finally up to the various Education Departments to ensure this potential is fully realised.