

The student files

JD Erickson jazzed about the saxophone

BY DANI CLIFTON



First-year student JD Erickson is a talented and passionate musician; as an up and coming artist in the world of jazz, he has a certain sax appeal.

The Clackamas Print: Take us back to that moment when you first realized that jazz was your future.

JD Erickson: It was my freshman year at band camp, actually, as lame as that sounds. My director had hired a really funky sax player to come in and play and he brought a whole band, and they just rocked the house for the first night I was there. I told my friends, 'That's what I want to do. That seems like so much fun.' And that was the inspiration I needed to get myself going.

TCP: Looking forward from there, who were your musical inspirations, your jazz mentors?

JE: Well, I've had a few mentors throughout the years. I've studied with multiple different jazz masters if you will, and not all saxophone players ... Derek Sims, he's a trumpet player ... John Nasto, a sax player ... Renato Caranto, a sax player ... Clark Blondy, he's a sax player. I'm currently studying with Gary Harris, who's another sax player. Charlie Doggett, I'm looking forward to starting up with him real soon; he's a drummer and then Clay Giberson, he's on piano. I've studied with all kinds of people.

TCP: If you could spend an afternoon with anyone, alive or deceased, who would it be?

JE: Well, he's still alive today and my number one idol — jazz — anything, he's just evolved as my listening has evolved; his name is Tucker Antell, he's from Boston, Mass. and he's a tenor saxophone player and he evolves just as

much as I evolve, and when my ears develop as to what I'm listening to, his playing seems to follow that. So I've always had a reason to keep listening to him. He's just followed along with me. It's really cool and I'd love to meet him someday.

TCP: Knowing what you know thus far in life, what nugget of wisdom would you tell your five-year old self?

JE: Find what you love to do, early, no matter what it is; that's what I would recommend.

TCP: Flash forward four or five decades. You're sitting across from an author who is penning your memoirs. What are some of the highlights of your career that you want to be revisiting?

JE: Playing at the Village Vanguard would be awesome, with a jazz quartet featuring me. That would be something; something definitely on my bucket list. The Village Vanguard is the venue that everyone's played at: Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane — it's just the jazz place everyone's gone to; kind of like Birdland or Blue Note. The Village Vanguard is a very, very famous jazz club.

TCP: As an up-and-coming jazz artist, the world is quite literally your stage. What is it that you wish to convey to your global audience through your music?

JE: I like to think of myself as a very happy person and I try to always be in a good mood. Normally I am, and I like to put that through my music. I like to have it go somewhere and I just want it to be inspirational for someone else, to have someone listen to me and have that same — what if I was that someone's 'freshman year at band camp.' So when I play, I'm trying to think, what can I do to make a happy story out of how I'm playing? What ideas can I play that go off of the previous one? So I try to tell a story throughout most of it while also trying to play to the best of my ability because I feel everyone who comes out to hear you play deserves to hear the best you've got and that's something I'm really passionate about, that every moment is a chance to give it your all, no holding back.

photo by Katie Archer

ON THE COVER: Design editor Brandon Chorum tributes David Bowie, who died Jan. 10.

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