

FEATURE AT SIX

Galbraith uses his saxophone for expression

By Josh Snyedker

The Carlisle Mercury Staff
CARLISLE—Jerry Galbraith didn't know what instrument he would pick up when the school band director laid them out. The saxophone was his sister's idea. But from the first time he tested the need to play, the sax became his source of expression, an art form he continuously re-creates.

It was in the fifth grade when they had sign-ups for the school band. "Something within me just told me I wanted to join," Galbraith said.

Since his first notes on the school owned sax launched him, Galbraith has performed with more small bands than he can recall off-hand.

For Galbraith, music is an instant art form. It is present in the notes of a band. Once the note is finished, it's gone, he said, and the only way to get it back is to play it again.

"Something in me just comes out when I perform. But the art is not permanent like a painter's or sculptor's creations. A painting or sculpture is finished and done. You can see it and touch it. Music, on the other hand, must always be re-created," Galbraith said.

Galbraith became adept at reading music early. He took to the sax right away and by high school the necessity to read music was overpowered by his own ear.

"Once I learned to play the right way, it was as if my ear took over directing signals within my heart and brain."

"Because of this, it is not difficult for me to join with any type band and just start playing and in that is true creativity. To play songs is

good, but I love good, long, free style jam sessions," he said.

Galbraith did not begin playing with the idea of making music a career.

The risks and unstable life musicians face did not have an appeal to him. Even if he had a lot of people saying it was one of the luckiest he had that did not hit the time, he said the struggle along the road to success and the cost of attaining acceptance in the popular arena were unwavering. It is not his ultimate goal, he said.

"Every musician dreams or wonders about making it to the top. It's quite a temptation, they are willing to take on the risk. But all I really want to do is play. Doesn't matter where or to whom as long as they enjoy it and I get a kick out of it. That's all that matters," he said.

For 25 years Galbraith has worked with a variety of bands, playing everything from straight country to funk and rock. But he is not prone to change and start a band, preferring instead to mold himself in with an established band.

"There is a constant problem getting commitment out of members of a new band. Like anything its hard getting started and build a repertoire."

From the Heavens Seven, Galbraith played with a number of dance bands with names ranging from the Junior Corey Band to the Psychos playing a wide variety of music.

Musicians are fickle people, he said. A band gets together and for awhile everything clicks and inspiration runs rampant, he said.

But after a couple of years of playing stagnation and boredom set in. Bands with regular parties and wedding receptions also took second place in a girl's singing list, as well.

talent contest in Sharsburg. But according to Galbraith, they rocked the show.

"I think we played either Secret Agent Man or Batman. Whoever, I do remember the musicians face did not have an appeal to him. Even if he had a lot of people saying it was one of the luckiest he had that did not hit the time, he said the struggle along the road to success and the cost of attaining acceptance in the popular arena were unwavering. It is not his ultimate goal, he said.

The horn was expensive and his father, not poor, but certainly not well off, sacrificed a bit to get the horn, he said.

But, unlike the fate some musical instruments face in a young man's hands, that covered in the top of a closet, Galbraith continued to improve his playing.

The first time his father came to hear Galbraith play, he didn't know if he liked it until later in the evening when he heard a knock at his bedroom door.

"In my father's hand the note I signed and across the note I signed, paid in full. He took something and did something of a new band. Like anything its hard getting started and build a repertoire."

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Galbraith's love for the saxophone has led him to be proficient with the alto, tenor, and soprano as well as the flute and clarinet.

When songs do not call for horns, he relies on percussion instruments, lounge or tambores, to keep him occupied.

He also sings, but not often, he said.

His most recent association has been with the Silver Creek Band featuring experienced artists that have backed up top country and pop music rangers for many years.

Primarily, though, Silver Creek is a regional Kentucky band who have taken Galbraith on for songs they play on the Silver Creek Band songs.

"Usually, horns are left out of a band because it isn't seen as an absolute requirement for a band. A horn is some times viewed as an extra man who who money is split. But I play the role of horn people like and will pay additional money to have," Galbraith said, smiling.

Concetti aside, Galbraith said working with seasoned professionals in Silver Creek have given him a unique challenge as an artist.

The band has amazed a following in the years it has been organized, but Galbraith said as a relative newcomer, fans of the band have readily accepted him.

In addition he has been in the recording of two original Silver Creek Band songs, "Trust Me" and "The Damage is Done".

The best bands, he said, are those that can play a variety of different songs and genres in one show. It is an element that makes the difference between a good and great weekend band, he said.

But the key element for his success is the support he gets from his family. He plays on average, three weekends out of every month. Other he travels to places in towns two and three hours drive away and doesn't make it home until early in the morning.

For a family man with one child, there are times when his playing hours put strains on his family under-stands his desire to perform and he gets a great deal of support.

Night clubs and bars do not make up the majority of their playing sites nor are they a source of big money, he said.

With the recent crackdown on drunken driving, night clubs have experienced a marked loss in business and do not have room for the amount of bands they used to schedule. Therefore, Silver Creek and many other bands play private parties and special events more than anything else.

"I have played many types of music and have grown to appreciate, in some way, all types of music, except rap. It may be a generation gap forming in me, but I have a problem accepting this new music as my," Galbraith said.

Galbraith's secret to successful playing is learning how to compensate for wrong notes.

"If you hit a wrong note I never notice it. I never notice when the music comes and I hit the wrong note again and everyone thinks that's me," Galbraith said.

Music will always comprise an important part of Galbraith's life, he said, as long as it stays fresh and remains inspired.

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