

JAZZ REVIEW**LENINGRADSKI BAND  
PLAYS WITH SPIRIT, GUSTO**

By ZAN STEWART

**W**hile it didn't exactly live up to the letter of its name, the Leningradski Dixieland Jazz Band played with such spirit in its Los Angeles debut Thursday night that nobody cared.

Playing before about 400 fans in El Pequeno Ballroom at the Marriott Hotel near LAX, the seven-piece ensemble worked as much in the style of the small groups of the swing era as it did the two-beat stuff we associate with Dixieland. But whatever the material, the gentlemen from Leningrad played it with persuasive gusto and poise, delivering ensemble passages and solos with a raucous exhilaration that drew deserved ovations.

These are accomplished players, who know their craft. In particular, leader/alto saxophonist Oleg Grigoriyevitch Kuvaitsev—who seemed like a cross between Johnny Hodges and Benny Carter—and trombonist Anatoliy Mikhailovich Chimiris displayed bold, impressive big sounds, which helped give their solos plenty of snap.

These two, along with pianist Constantin Ivanovich Dyubenko and clarinetist Alexander Lvovich Uyskin, were smooth technicians who could go from one note hit repeatedly into a swinging, convoluted statement—like a tap dancer working out on a single step and then fluttering down the staircase—without a hitch. The other

members—Vladimir Sergeyevich Voronin, trumpet; Boris Ivanovich Ershov, banjo; Alexander Ivanovich Skrypnik, drums, and Yuri Borisovich Miroschnichenko, string bass—also made solid contributions.

The set included the peppy "Royal Garden Blues," the perhaps requisite "Midnight in Moscow" and a driving "I Got Rhythm." In the manner of the best early jazz music, the Leningradski fellows did indeed make a joyous noise.

The Jacques Gauthe Creole Rice Band opened the show, playing tunes mostly from the mid-'20s to early-'30s with fervor and authenticity. Duke Ellington's sultry "The Mooch" and Sidney Bechet's oozing "Kansas City Man Blues" led to Bechet's "Petit Fleur" This evocative, bittersweet ballad, where Gauthe alternated dusky and penetrating soprano sax tones, was the set's high point.