



Fred Hutcherson 8/The Register Star  
Soviet jazz saxophonist Oleg Grigoriyevich Kuvaitsev.



John Collinge/The Register Star  
Jamming at the Clock Tower Sunday were (from left) Jim Beebee (trombone), Anatoly Mikhailovich Chimiris (trombone), Oleg Grigoriyevich Kuvaitsev (saxophone), Vladimir Sergeyevich Voronin (trumpet) and (background) Mike Barnett (bass).

# Perfect harmony

Words fail Soviets, but music strikes a note with Americans at jazz summit



Fred Hutcherson 8/The Register Star  
Banjo player Boris Ivanovich Ershov entertained the crowd with his comical antics.

By John Collinge  
The Register Star

Minutes after jamming with a group of American jazz stars, Soviet saxophonist Oleg Grigoriyevich Kuvaitsev is struck speechless.

Although Kuvaitsev and his comrades — the Leningrad Dixieland Jazz Band — had heard plenty of native jazz since arriving stateside May 20, their performance Sunday at the Clock Tower Inn was a first with Americans onstage.

"No words, no words," concludes the 37-year-old bandleader in his struggle to describe the experience.

The ballroom jam session had spontaneously moved to the Quark lounge, where a musical party extended the "jazz summit" to nearly five hours.

The preceding show was a study in mutual appreciation, proving there is no Cold War in jazz. The Soviets jaded in silent awe at the free-wheeling play of their American counterparts while an appreciative crowd was moved to standing ovations by the visitors' virtuosity.

"I think the Soviet band is great; they're better than 90 percent of the bands playing in this country," praised Chicagoan Jim Beebe, a trombonist in the American band. "They're all professional; this is no weekend band. That arrangement they did on 'Maple Leaf Rag' was great. These guys could play anywhere."

Soviet trumpet player Vladimir Sergeyevich Voronin returned the compliment, saying the American jazzmen had elevated his band's standards and taught it many musical lessons.

"That's the kind of band I want ours to be like. They have a good swing and fantastic instrumentation," he said. "It's nice to find Dixieland jazz in the U.S. is alive and well. It's going down in the Soviet Union because people prefer rock and soul and other music."

The Rockford stop was the seventh in this country for the eight-member Soviet troupe, which flies home June 15 after concerts in Philadelphia, Boston and Washington. The band already has visited Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Denver, LaCrosse and Milwaukee in this, its first-ever trip to the United States.

With members ranging in age from 28 to 50, the Leningrad band has been together in various forms for 25 years. Up until three weeks ago, its

# United States full of wonders for visitors

By John Collinge  
The Register Star

Despite its many comforts and luxuries, the United States does not tempt all visiting Soviets to forfeit their Soviet allegiances and jump ship.

"I like your country, but I love my country," said Oleg Grigoriyevich Kuvaitsev, leader of a group of Soviet jazz players who visited Rockford Sunday.

Kuvaitsev told of Soviet emigres he has encountered during recent concert

stops in various parts of the country: They like the climate and all the amenities of free enterprise but miss speaking their native language and the family members they left behind.

Many, he said, approached him with tears in their eyes.

Kuvaitsev said he has been most impressed by the nation's diversity and relative "newness" in comparison to the Soviet Union and particularly Leningrad, his home town.

"Leningrad is an old city. Here, we

see many new things; new houses, new construction," he said. "It's all very exciting and there are a great many things I've seen for the first time. Education is different. Medicine is different. You have such beautiful service here, and the skyscrapers amaze me."

The Leningrad Dixieland Jazz Band has been so busy on its 26-day, 10-city tour that Kuvaitsev said he hasn't had time to miss his wife and three children. But he does miss soup,

unaware — until now — that all he had to do was ask for it when ordering meals.

"American food is too dry," he complained.

Food has become an issue with the Soviets and their American escort. John Ballard of the Wyoming-based Space Agency touring firm. To ensure they'll have ample funds to buy gifts, the visitors have skimped on meals. Ballard said he has been forced to

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