



Mark Graham/Times Herald

Teacher Bart Marantz plans to take his trumpet when he goes to S. Africa to conduct jazz workshops.

DALLAS

Teacher to hold jazz workshops in S. Africa

By CATHERINE CHRISS

Staff writer

When the phone rang early one April morning, Bart Marantz expected to hear congratulations from New York on student musicians at the Arts Magnet High School winning several national awards.

But the phone call came from across the world.

The U.S. ambassador in Johannesburg was inviting Marantz to spend a month in South Africa this summer leading jazz workshops.

Marantz was surprised at the idea of a white American teaching jazz in tumultu-

ous South Africa, a country where whites and blacks are segregated by law, where racial factions face threats daily because of the country's apartheid policy.

"My first reaction was: South Africa? I couldn't believe it," Marantz said from the studios of the downtown school where he's director of jazz studies. "It was a total surprise and my reaction was a little disbelief, like someone was putting me on."

Marantz, 36, is one of 10 artists who received a teaching grant from the Federated Union of Black Artists in Johannesburg. The grant pays all expenses and \$100 per day.

He'll teach his specialty, jazz improvisa-

tion techniques, to music instructors and students. Although jazz is strong in South Africa, America leads the world in clinical improvisation, he said.

Marantz, an effusive musician who plays trumpet and fluegelhorn, plans to teach blacks and whites. He said he would not have accepted a similar invitation from whites in South Africa.

"I don't want to support anything that goes against my beliefs," he said. "I'm not a political person. I'm there to work with music."

The invitation came several months af-

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ter Marantz hosted Siphon Sempamla, president of the artists union, at the high school studios during a national tour. Marantz gave Sempamla an album recorded by his award-winning jazz orchestra. No one mentioned the possibility of a grant.

Marantz, who leaves July 7, admits some concern about the visit. He's tracking apartheid news and plans to call home daily.

U.S. officials and South African musicians have assured him the country is safe. The embassy is providing him a chauffeur.

The opportunity to travel in South Africa, where jazz originated, is a rare one that clearly excites Marantz.

"This is where it all started," said Marantz, gesturing at a picture of famed jazz trumpeter Louis Armstrong above his desk. "It's a black

art form. It's exciting to go and experience it at the base."

While there, he hopes to record some tribal music — "the raw music being played in its natural habitat."

Marantz grew up in Miami, attended the University of Miami and Indiana University and received a masters in Afro-American studies from the New England Conservatory of Music. He toured and taught at two community colleges before joining the arts magnet school in 1983.

Marantz, who's had to take several shots to prepare for the trip, said he is willing to make a few sacrifices for the experience. A typhoid shot he took triggered three hours of convulsions and two days of flu.

"I'm going to an area of the world that is the roots of my music. This is where it all started," he said. "It's an honor."