

Lake-Sumter musicians cooking under sound direction of jazzman

By MATT MARKEY

Lake little sentinel

LEESBURG — After touring the country with Ray Charles, the Glenn Miller Band, and Gladys Knight and the Pips, you would think a jazz musician would consider the classroom boring.

But Bart Marantz has shunned the nightlife of a touring musician for a dual role as teacher-performer at Lake-Sumter Community College.

He arrived without ceremony this summer, but ever since the school's fall session started, things have been hopping in the music department.

Although he is officially listed as director of instrumental music, the career jazz musician has also served unofficially as a concert promoter, community relations officer, music researcher, arranger, composer, record librarian and liaison to the music industry.

Marantz's efforts have pushed the school's interest in music to an all-time high note and thrust the students into the community spotlight.

"Things are really beginning to happen out here," he said. "And with our students and faculty and the backing we're getting from the people in the area, our music program is really going places. This little, tiny school in the sticks has a better music program than a lot of other larger community colleges."

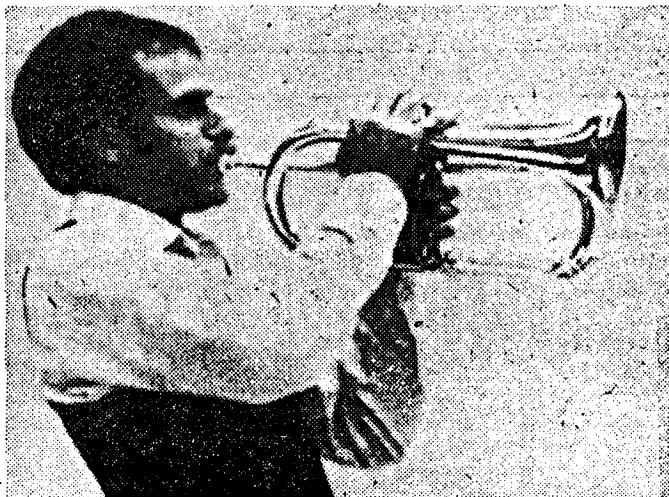
Since Marantz arrived, the school's various musical ensembles have staged more than a half dozen free concerts, and each has received a standing ovation. He hopes the presentations will give the students a chance to show the result of their hours of practice, and give the community a chance to develop a hunger for live musical entertainment.

"There's a lot of talent here, and any musician that's a good musician needs to perform and show his wares," Marantz said. "These community concerts give us that opportunity, and I'd like to see them flourish to the point that the people expect quality musical performances on a regular basis."

Marantz, who performed professionally for the first time at age 14, played with some of the world's greatest jazz musicians while touring off and on for the past 15 years. He said he left the touring life and came to Lake-Sumter "on a whim."

After about six months on the job, Marantz concludes that "greatness is just down the road" for the school's music program. "I've had nothing but support. The administration and faculty here have never given me a negative word," he said.

"I foresee the department doubling in size in three or four years, and the program improving to the point that our musical reputation will put us on the national map in-



Ray Powell/the little sentinel

stead of on the state map." Marantz hopes to add five jazz courses to the music curriculum in the near future, but he expects his students to do a great deal of learning outside the classroom as well. That will be accomplished through the performances and instructional workshops presented by prominent musicians.

With the help of a large endowment from Leesburg's Sun Bank, Marantz is bringing internationally acclaimed jazz musician Maynard Ferguson and his band to the college in February.

Ferguson will present an evening concert during the two-day Jazz Festival, but Marantz considers the highlight of his visit to be the educational clinic and miniconcert Ferguson will take part in with local musicians.

"Jazz is no longer taught on the streets, and this will give students a rare opportunity to learn from one of the great ones," Marantz said. "The masters are coming in off the road and teaching, since they feel they have a responsibility to their profession to pass on their talents."

Marantz and his students were honored Tuesday when they received an invitation to audition by tape for this summer's Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. If selected, the college's musical entourage would perform concerts in Brussels and Paris before moving on to the festival site.