

University of Greenwich Big Band Group



How it started:

The University Big Band was formed in 1985 by some Thames Polytechnic staff, who had been playing in Jazz and Big Bands at Goldsmith College. At that time Avery Hill College had just become part of Thames Polytechnic, and it provided an opportunity to start the Avery Hill Band with the support of the Avery Hill College Music Department. We rely heavily on dedicated professionals and amateurs from the local community. Formal music teaching was reduced in the early 1990's, but music has returned to form part of the teacher training program at the Avery Hill Campus. In addition to the full Big band there are also three other small Jazz/Swing Bands within the University Big Band Group.

Rehearsals take place at the Avery Hill Campus in the evening, for all four bands. Many concerts have been performed on all the University campuses, by all the bands, many of these have been to raise funds for

local hospices and other charities. We frequently help other local organisations with concerts outside the University.

Until 2019 the Bands were based at the Avery Hill Mansion site, but when this site closed during 2020, a new music room was set up at the Sparrows Farm Building on the Southwood Site. The Covid situation delayed the development of the new music room and so rehearsals were not possible during most of 2020. We are now waiting for the relaxing of the Covid restrictions to enable rehearsals and concerts to start again for all the band as we move into 2021

Joining the Band - New players

If you are interested in playing the Big Band Music Group welcomes applications from staff and students who would like to be part of the jazz experience - good music sight reading needed. We can also support students who wish to start their own band group within the university.

The Bands also accept bookings for university and private events.

To find out more contact Band Manager and former University of Greenwich lecturer Fred Parrett on 020-8460-2116 or e-mail: bigband@gre.ac.uk.

The bands

The University of Greenwich Big Band

A full Big Band with Saxes, Trumpets, Trombones and Rhythm. This talented group, has entertained and delighted audiences of all ages, with concerts for the University, and at various local and charity events. Rehearsals every Monday night.

Band Leader - Nigel Garrard



Jazz Improvising Band

This is a small group session - rehearsals most Tuesday evenings. Players/instruments for this group include, saxophones, trumpets, trombones, keyboard, bass, guitar, drums. Reasonable sight reading essential. A unique opportunity to improvise in a variety of jazz styles

Band Leader- Ray Harvey



University Swing Band

Most Thursday evenings this group meets to play the sounds of the 1930s-40s Swing and Dance Bands and some Dixieland Jazz. the group has places for the usual brass and reed front line, and the normal rhythm section. We can often fit in new players for these sessions This group has often performed at fund raising events for local organisations and festivals

Band Leader - Fred Parrett



West Coast Jazz Band

West Coast Jazz is based on the music played by the Dave Pell octet in Los Angeles in the 1950's. This group used arrangements by Shorty Rogers, Andre Previn of a range of familiar and popular tunes that were mainly used in Prom Dances in the USA. University group is an Octet, with Trumpet, Trombone, Tenor and Baritone Sax, plus four section rhythm. Principally a rehearsal group but they do play at local charity and jazz events.

Band Leader- Ray Harvey

Previous Concerts by the University Big Band

Concert announcements

The University of Greenwich Big Band



**Medway In The Mood
Mother's Day Concert**
Sunday 31 March 2019
Pilkington Building , Medway Campus
In aid of the Wisdom Hospice

A presentation linking the history Medway and the Chatham Dockyard Area with the development of music, particularly of Jazz and Big Band music



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**The Cotton Club, Harlem
And All That Jazz**



Proudly supporting Demelza

3 p.m. Sunday
18 March 2018
at the Mansion Building, Avery Hill Campus

Supporting the Demelza Hospice Care For Children Charity
See more at: www.demelza.org.uk



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The Easter Parade



3 p.m. Sunday
2 April 2017
at the Mansion

Supporting the Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice

University of Greenwich Big Band- Charity Concert

Sponsored by the SCI - London Regional Group and the RSC- Kent section



Sunday 6th April 2014, 3:00pm
At the Ward Room, Pembroke Building
Medway Campus- University of Greenwich
Free admission, by ticket only



There will be a charity collection for Wisdom Hospice, Rochester



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**Big Band, Chemistry,
And All That Jazz**





Big band history

“The origins of jazz, an urban music, can be traced in the late 19th century to the plantations of the Southern USA, the streets of America’s cities, and from two distinct musical traditions, those of West Africa and Europe. West Africa provided the incessant rhythmic drive, but the European influence had more to do with classical qualities of harmony and melody.

Although New Orleans is credited as being the centre for Jazz in the early 20th century, the music really took off in the early 1920s, when trumpeter Louis Armstrong left New Orleans to create a revolutionary new music in Chicago. This was followed by a movement of musicians to Chicago and New York bringing a permanent shift from South to North.

The early bands of the Swing Era emerged on the scene in the early ‘20s, and credit for the beginnings of the big band era must go to leader-

arranger Fletcher Henderson, who somewhat enlarged the small combo bands into bigger ensembles. By establishing sections of trumpets, trombones, saxophones and rhythm, Henderson and other arrangers were able to create music of greater colour, range, texture and power.

Big band became the popular music of its day, hitting its peak in the mid-1930s. Well-known bandleaders like Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Chick Webb, Benny Goodman, Charlie Barnet, Jimmy Lunceford and Glenn Miller wrote and recorded a virtual parade of hit tunes that were played not only on radio but in dancehalls everywhere.

Although big band declined after World War II, there has been a renaissance in interest in Big Band music.”

Fred Parrett – December 2020

