Club 7 Jazz Band – Biography

Michael Almich, the founder and leader of the **Club 7 Jazz Band**, has been surrounded by traditional jazz music since the age of twelve and has always had a dream of performing this style of music for a living. His love for the classics has pushed him to excel in an instrument that is not prominent in the Jazz community today – the Clarinet. Under the influence of such greats as Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Pete Fountain, Woody Herman, and Bob Draga, Michael and his quartet have captured the sound of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, and made it their own.

As a bandleader, Michael is relatively new to the traditional jazz circuit; however, in years of performance, he is one of the very experienced. He made his mark at jazz festivals when he performed with the Oregon Coast Lab Band (1996 – 2001) all the while spending quality time 'battling it out' on stage with renowned Clarinetist Bob Draga of Titan Hot 7.

In 2001, Michael entered the University of Oregon, where he studied under world-renown Clarinet performer and professor, Dr. Wayne Bennett. Dr. Bennett took Michael under his wing and taught him the rudiments of clarinet performance, musicianship, and personal excellence. Michael, in those four years, found a real passion for classical performance, which provided a great technical foundation for his jazz musicality and performance. In 2005, Michael graduated with a Bachelor of Music Degree in Clarinet Performance.

While studying at the University of Oregon, Michael also actively enrolled in the school's Jazz Studies program under Mr. Steve Owen. For three years Michael played Tenor Sax in the lab bands and played his clarinet in many small combos. It was here that Michael met two phenomenal musicians – Dorian Crow (bass) and Easton Stuard (piano). Dorian and Easton, eager to perform all styles of music, soon became part of the rhythm section for **Club 7**. Rounding out the rhythm section is Kyle Owen (drums) whom Michael had first met in high school.

Dorian Crow has since graduated from the University of Oregon (2007) with a degree in Jazz Studies and performs regularly in Eugene and with the Rogue Valley Symphony Orchestra; Easton Stuard also graduated with a Jazz Studies degree (2006) and is currently studying toward his Master Degree in Music Education at Northern Iowa University. Kyle Owen is a first year student at Portland State University in the Jazz Studies program.

In 2004, the **Club 7 Jazz Band** began performing locally at music school events and college dances, and in Eugene; but soon found themselves traveling all over Oregon, including Coos Bay, Medford, Bend, Sisters, and Portland, performing mainly at Traditional Jazz Festivals. The band has also performed at the Sacramento Jazz Jubilee (2007) where they developed a nice following and were well received by the crowds

In late 2007, the band added Jessica Owen, Kyle's sister, as vocalist. She lives in Olympia, WA and works as a youth counselor and performs with the band by request of the concert presenter.

Club 7 is quickly making a name for itself as one of the premiere jazz ensembles of this generation. It has been written, "**Club 7** embodies the spirit and love of Traditional Jazz, but brings their own influence and style to make the music their own." On their first CD, **"A Closer Walk,"** the band has captured the sound of the 30s and 40's, an indication that they refuse to let that music become a memory. In January 2008, the band recorded their second CD, **"Shine,"** expanding their musical presentation.

In 2008, **Club 7 Jazz Band's** schedule includes Jazz Festivals [Orange County (CA) Classic Jazz Festival, Medford (OR) Jazz Festival, Ocean Shores (WA) Dixieland Jazz Festival], several swing dances in Portland, private concerts and events, and several fundraising events.