

Friends of Jazz annual picnic to feature 6 musical ensembles

BY RUSS NEFF
FOR THE PATRIOT-NEWS

Six musical ensembles are slated to provide the jazz for Sunday's 16th annual Central Pennsylvania Jazz Picnic.

Scheduled for 1 to 7 p.m., the Friends of Jazz are holding the picnic at the Mechanicsburg Club Picnic Grounds in Silver Spring Twp.

The groups scheduled to perform include the Central Pennsylvania Youth All-Star Band directed by Ron Waters and the Friends of Jazz Youth Big Band directed by Jim Milbrand.

Also on the schedule are the local groups In Transit with guitarist Jay Umble, the Jim Wood Trio with vocalist Diane Wilson and "rich-mauro.jaz" with bassist Steve Meashey, saxophonist Curt Sipe, guitarist Bill Druck and drummer Rich Mauro.

The special guest group of the afternoon is the Fred Hughes Trio with pianist Hughes, bassist Tom Williams and drummer Keith Killgo.

For Hughes, Sunday's picnic performance can be described as somewhat of a welcome-home engagement.

Hughes, a Lancaster native, was an active participant in the Central Pennsylvania Jazz scene during the mid-1980s. He cultivated a rabid following among area fans and routinely performed at such now-forgotten venues such as Lounge 21 and the Hilmar.

In 1986, Hughes teamed with bassist Hassan J.J. Wiggins and drummer Sam Banks to release an album entitled "From The Start." The pianist also wrote and recorded music for radio and television commercials at a Lancaster studio.

Just as quickly as Hughes seemed to burst upon the local scene, he de-



From left are Fred Hughes Jr., Keith Killgo and Tom Williams, the Fred Hughes Trio.

Details: Central Pennsylvania Jazz Picnic, 1 to 7 p.m. Sunday, Mechanicsburg Club Picnic Grounds, Silver Spring Twp. (Exit 18, Interstate 81); admission, \$10; information, 540-1010.

parted the area to assume the keyboard chair with the U.S. Army Jazz Ambassadors. During the next seven years Hughes would tour all 50 states, Canada, Mexico, Japan and Europe with the Army jazz ensemble.

Since departing the Army, Hughes has taken up residence in the Baltimore/Washington area. He along with bassist Williams and drummer Killgo frequently collaborate with saxophonist Tim Eyermann or with trumpeter Vaughn Nark.

Late in 1996 Hughes and colleagues released a self-produced compact disc entitled "Out Of The Blue." The collection of jazz standards and original compositions garnered positive reviews from publications as diverse as The Washington Post and the Jazz News newsletter.

Fans who recall Hughes' playing style of a decade ago will be pleased to learn that time appears to have not dampened his musical fires. What will be new to local ears is Hughes' compositional skills and the artistry of his fellow musicians.

Picnicgoers unfamiliar with the location of the Mechanicsburg Club grounds are advised to call the Friends of Jazz office at 540-1010 for directions. The event, at which food and beverages will be available, will be held rain or shine.